■ Sports / A22

'Merciless' Marquez a tough proposition for Paquiao

■ R Estate / B8

A suburb transplanted to The Fort

■ Entertainment / A28

Groom had to be reminded to kiss the bride

■ World / A10

Bombers kill 10 in Israeli port

Tanong ng Bayan / A20

Internet sex orgy: A special report

NGAYONG ALAS-10 NG GABI

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Reds accused of using polls to drive rebellion

A GROUP of mayors visiting National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales recently had an unusual request as he prepared to fly to Europe to meet with communist leaders living in exile.

"We heard, Mr. Secretary, that you are going to Oslo. Can you please appeal to the NDF (the communist-led National Democratic

REDS / A18

Tito says KNP support meant to oust 'Queen'

By Jerome Aning

IT'S NOT a permanent alliance but only a temporary one to topple the Queen.

So said Vice President Teofisto "Tito" Guingona Jr., in effect.

Guingona yesterday defended his decision to back Fernando Poe Jr. in the presidential race but he clarified he would be the film actor's adviser

TITO/ A5

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Tuesday, March 16, 2004 ★★ 52 pages / 4 sections / vol. 19 / no. 99 P18

website: www.inq7.net

FPJ camp to Lacson: Quit

Palace also considers Poe top rival of GMA

By Carlito Pablo, Norman Bordadora and Christine O. Avendaño

ACTOR Fernando Poe Jr. shouldn't even attend today's scheduled unification talks with Sen. Panfilo Lacson if the senator wants Poe to be his vice president, supporters of the actor yesterday said.

"You cannot expect FPJ to slide down to the position of vice president," said Juan Ponce Enrile, a senatorial candidate of the Poe-led Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

"That's out of the question," added Enrile, a member of the opposition's selection committee that earlier had picked Poe over Lacson, a move that divided the opposition.

The KNP wants a unified opposition because, according to latest opinion polls, Poe is running neck-and-neck with President Macapagal-Arroyo, who is seeking a full six-year term.

The opposition coalition expects Poe to get the bulk of Lacson's supporters should the senator quit the presidential race. Sen. Edgardo Angara, a KNP leader, said 60 percent of Lacson's supporters would go for Poe and the rest might go for the administration candidate.

Lacson said he was looking forward to seeing Poe sliding down to be his running mate when they meet one-on-one at a common friend's home at 4 p.m. Someone close to the senator said the meeting would be held in Makati City.

"I hope that FPJ would agree to be my vice president," Lacson said in Tarlac City, when asked about what he hoped to get from his first meeting with the KNP standard-bearer since the start of the campaign period.

"Everybody is going to be a winner. He'll beat Noli de Castro, I'll beat the other presidential candidate and Loren Legarda will win as a senator," the senator said.

But Angara said it was Lacson who should quit the presidential race because there was "no chance at all" that Poe would accept the senator's proposal.

"It's wishful thinking," Angara said in a phone interview, of Poe sliding down to be Lacson's running mate.

Lacson should quit because his core support "has not increased" and he has not been doing well in the surveys, according to Angara. Lacson was lagging in recent surveys at fourth place behind Ms

FPJ CAMP/ A18

ELMER Reyes Jacinto (left) and other successful examinees in the board exams for physicians take their oath in ceremonies at the Manila Hotel. After serving as a volunteer nurse, Jacinto says "it's time that I also served myself."

ERIK ARAZAS

'NO REGRETS'

Top doctor to pursue US nursing job

By Volt Contreras

DRAWING wild cheers at oath-taking ceremonies for new medical doctors yesterday, Elmer Reyes Jacinto was definite about what he wanted.

"*Tuloy pa rin ako* (I'll pursue my plan). I've set my mind and heart on it," he said.

There is no turning back now for Jacinto, the 28-year-old Basilan native and this year's medical board exams topnotcher who had candidly spoken of his plan to work in the United States as a nurse for lack of attractive job opportunities even for top physicians in the Philippines.

The consistent scholar and honor graduate who surmounted great odds as a boy growing up in Lamitan, Basilan, said he was sticking to his plan as he was officially inducted to the medical profession yesterday, along with 947 others at the jampacked Manila Hotel.

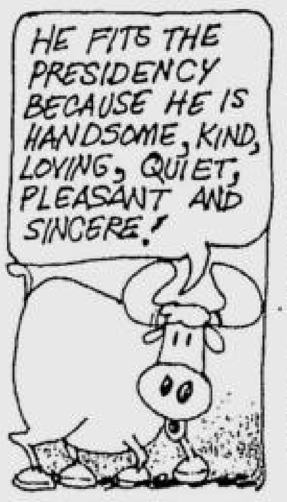
He had "no regrets" about his decision and his making it public—even though he received a number of calls from his peers expressing a mixed sense of loss ("*panghihinayang*") and empathy, he said.

There could be "some delays," however, Jacinto admitted, because his alma mater, the Our Lady of Fatima College in Valenzuela City, had asked him to teach first at its College of Medicine.

The INQUIRER carried Jacinto's story two weeks ago, underscoring the fate of many others in his profession who have been—and still are—being lured to the attractions of "stateside" living and

TOP/ A4

Sotto says voters choose a person, not a platform


HE FITS THE PRESIDENCY BECAUSE HE IS HANDSOME, KIND, LOVING, QUIET, PLEASANT AND SINCERE!

By Carlito Pablo

IT'S THE person, not the platform.

Opposition Sen. Vicente "Tito" Sotto III made this distinction at a rally for presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. in Butuan City on Friday night, saying that voters elect the person based on what they know about him, not on his platform of government.

Poe has consistently refused to accept invitations to two debates in which presidential candidates are expected to discuss the merits of their respective platforms.

SOTTO/ A4

Disqualification cases poised against GMA

By Martin P. Marfil and Michael Lim Ubac

A TEAM of lawyers from the camp of presidential candidate Raul Roco is scheduled to file tomorrow a disqualification case against President Macapagal-Arroyo for allegedly using taxpayer money running to billions of pesos in her election campaign.

This is not the only disqualification case that Ms Macapagal is facing.

A lawyer yesterday asked the Commission on Elections to disqualify her from the presidential race on the ground that she had exceeded the allowed 120 minutes of television advertising time allotted for each candidate.

In an 11-page petition, Jose Vicente B. Salazar said Ms Macapagal had already logged 189 minutes of television time in various stations from Feb. 10 to March 11.

Salazar said Ms Macapagal had logged 242 spots during the period, most of them 30- and 60-seconders.

"She has violated, not only Section 86 (of the Fair Elections Act) but the resolutions of the Comelec as well. She is guilty of blatantly skewing the playing field for television and radio media in her favor, to the detriment of her fellow candidates who are unable to equal her humongous money war chest for the campaign," Salazar said.

Salazar said he was a member of Pro-Con(stitution), the same group which filed a case against Philhealth and Philippine Chari-

DISQUALIFICATION / A18

Pro-US gov't of Aznar ousted in Spain elections

MADRID—Spain's ruling conservatives, saddled with allegations they made their country a target for al-Qaida, crashed to defeat in Sunday's general elections—the first time a government that backed the US-led war on Iraq has been voted out of office.

The loss at the hands of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party Party also deals a blow to the United States because Spain's next prime minister, Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, has pledged to bring home the 1,300 troops that Spain has stationed in Iraq when their tour of duty ends in July.

The Socialists ended the eight-year reign of the center-right party of Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar in a ground swell of voter anger and grief over his handling of terrorist bombings in Madrid last week.

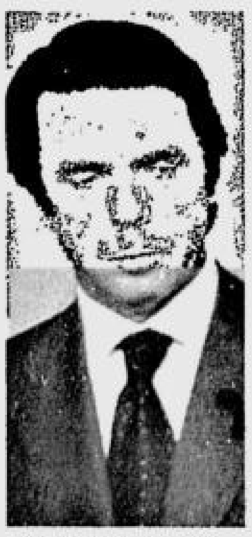
The bombings, the deadliest terror attack in Europe since World War II, turned on its head what just a few days ago seemed to be a likely victory by Aznar's Popular Party. Some voters believed that al-Qaida had plotted the attacks to punish Aznar for supporting the war, which Spaniards overwhelmingly opposed.

Investigators reported Sunday that there was growing evidence of involvement of Muslim fundamentalists in the attacks. They said one of five men arrested in the bombings had been linked to a suspected cell of al-Qaida in Spain, and a Spanish antiterrorism official said several of the men had been under surveillance before the attacks.

With each new bit of information about the investigation of the attack came accusations that Aznar's party may have tried to suppress evidence of possible al-Qaida involvement by assuming that Basque separatists were responsible.

The Socialist victory in Spain was

PRO-US/ A4



JOSE Maria Aznar and his government are voted out of office for backing the US-led war on Iraq.

AFP

SPAIN'S next prime minister, Socialist leader Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, thanks his supporters in front of party headquarters in Madrid for his victory in the general elections.

AFP

WEATHER FORECAST

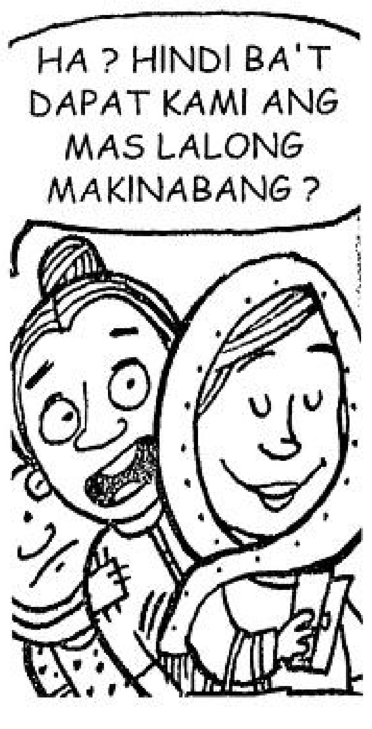
FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: CHONA GALANG, PDI RESEARCH/03/16/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	**Roxas**	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	**Cebu**	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	**Tacloban**	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

India, RP women lead counterparts in Asia


HA ? HINDI BA'T DAPAT KAMI ANG MAS LALONG MAKINABANG ?

INDIA and the Philippines lead Asian nations in getting more women into leadership positions while the countries of South Asia fall behind, a United Nations special ambassador said yesterday.

Women in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand are not as well-represented in politics but have benefited from economic growth while China has lagged in the advancement of women despite its rapid economic strides, said Erna Witoelar, UN special ambassador for Millennium Development Goals.

The UN Millennium Development Goals oversees a series of development targets for countries to attain by 2015, including promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women.

Witoelar, speaking on the sidelines of an Asian parliamentary conference in Manila said India and the Philippines both enjoyed a high proportion of women within their legislatures and in local positions.

But she said this did not mean that women in the Philippines were better off than in other countries. She said Filipino women were still subject to economic hardship with many migrating to cities or other countries to find jobs.

Ordinary women in Malaysia and Thailand had benefited from the general economic growth, Witoelar said, but remarked "despite higher economic growth, women in leadership positions are still low." This was also true in Indonesia despite a rule allocating parliament seats for women. Witoelar, an Indonesian, said none of the political parties there were able to meet quotas for female candidates in coming polls in April.

China was moving "slower in the advancement of women," the ambassador said, adding that "it is still very much a male-dominated leadership as well as a male-dominated ordinary life." She cited the one-child policy in China which led many families to abort their female fetuses in favor of male infants.

But China was still ahead of countries in South Asia like Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, she added.

Although some of these countries already had female heads of state, "for ordinary women, there are quite a lot of social and cultural constraints," Witoelar said without elaborating.

AFP

Estrada riles vs heat; VMMC transfer seen

By Armand Nocum

THE LIVING isn't easy with the approach of summer, and his bum knees are acting up because of the heat.

Not even retired Sandiganbayan Justice Manuel Pamaran, one of his defense lawyers, hinting that he would not mind deposed President Estrada's return to the Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC) for therapy sessions was enough to ease his discomfort.

Yesterday, Estrada called up the INQUIRER to complain that the heat in his one-story detention quarters at Camp Capinpin in Tanay is affecting his arthritic knees that are in need of immediate surgery. "*Ang init dito ngayon. Sumasakit ang tuhod ko* (It's hot here. My knees hurt)," said Estrada, who had earlier admitted being allowed to make occasional visits to his 15-hectare vacation estate beside the camp to entertain visitors.

Those out to deny him the comforts he used to enjoy in his two-story villa are "cruel," he complained. "They don't want to extend any courtesy to a former mayor, senator, vice president and President," he added.

According to him, his 99-year-old mother's blood pressure rose when she heard news about the controversy last Friday. She has been confined at the San Juan Medical Center since then, he said.

ESTRADA: It's hot here. My knees hurt.

Professing to have an undying devotion to his mother, he told the INQUIRER:

"I only have one mother. You can change your wife, but not your mother," said Estrada, who is not known to be shy about reporting his extra-marital affairs.

Defense lawyers have also earlier asked that Estrada, who is facing graft and plunder charges before the Sandiganbayan, be allowed to undergo weekly therapy sessions at the Cardinal Santos Hospital in San Juan. They have asked the court to withdraw its resolution allowing Estrada's operation in the United States until the former president is given a visa.

Lawyer Noel Malaya, however, is asking that Estrada be allowed to stay in his Tanay villa to spare the government of unnecessary expenses. Deputy Special Prosecutor Robert Kallos, however objected, saying this would be tantamount to a "house arrest." First Division Chair and President Justice Minita Chico-Nazario also shot down Malaya's proposal, saying the danger of Estrada being brought to Cardinal Santos "far outweighs" the proposed treatment sessions at the VMMC.

A number of groups have also expressed their support for "humane treatment" to be accorded the former president.

In separate statements, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Employees Confederation of the Philippines and the Seventh Day Adventist Church said giving him better treatment would be a good step towards unity.

Wife turns in No. 13 most wanted on kidnap list

By Leila B. Salaverria

HIS OWN wife yesterday turned in the country's 13th most wanted kidnapper to intelligence agents of the National Bureau of Investigation in Marawi City.

Ambrudin Macasilang was nabbed with the help of his wife, who was not identified, and Public Attorney's Office chief Persida Rueda Acosta.

Macasilang had a P500,000 price on his head. He is set to be presented to the media today by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Macasilang was picked up by agents of the NBI's Intelligence Special Operations Division (Isod) at his home in Marawi City on the basis of a warrant and taken directly to the Cagayan de Oro City airport. There, he was immediately booked on a Philippine Airlines flight to Manila, arriving at NBI headquarters just after 5 p.m. yesterday.

Macasilang was taken directly to the Isod office where reporters saw Acosta speaking with him.

Sources said Macasilang's wife led authorities to her husband after learning that the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (Naktf) headed by former Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes was closing in on him.

A source said Macasilang's wife then got in touch with Acosta, who called the NBI.

The source, however, could not say why Macasilang's wife did not want her husband to be arrested by Naktf agents.

Another source said Macasilang was in the jewelry business but had run into some trouble with regard to his trade.

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RP safe from terror–PNP

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE COUNTRY remains safe from terrorist attack despite last week's deadly Madrid train blasts, the Philippine National Police assured the public yesterday.

Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terror network and its regional affiliate, the Jemaah Islamiyah, have "no capacity" to launch attacks following the arrest of some of their top leaders and sympathizers here and abroad, said PNP Director for Intelligence Robert Delfin.

Stringent security measures had long been in place in the country, even before the Sept. 11 terror attacks in the United States, Delfin said.

The Philippines' own 9/11, he added, had come the year before with the bloody Rizal Day bombings on Dec. 30, 2000.

"We've long prepared for all terrorist activities," he told reporters. "The country need not worry."

The local campaign against terrorism will be given a boost today with the start of the two-day 18th Interpol Asian Regional Conference at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel in Mandaluyong City.

The Madrid blasts that killed 192 people will be high on the meeting's agenda, according to a senior Interpol official. The conference will gather at least 200 senior police officials from 63 countries, including Spain.

Delfin said the PNP had been coordinating with its counterparts in Australia and Israel even before the Madrid incident. Last year, a local police contingent attended a training-seminar on suicide bombings in Israel.

Threats from the JI, the official said, had been reduced tremendously with its operatives contained in certain areas in Mindanao.

Authorities had earlier claimed that JI recruits had been undergoing terrorist training in camps of the More Islamic Liberation Front.

The report received a boost after Malaysian authorities arrested several weeks ago six Indonesians believed to have trained in Mindanao who were trying to enter Malaysia by boat.

Delfin said the PNP would send a team of investigators to Malaysia to interrogate the suspected JI recruits.

Besides the JI, the Abu Sayyaf group has also been confined particularly to Basilan and Sulu, said PNP Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., who denied that an Abu Sayyaf leader had slipped into Metro Manila.

Initial reports identified the Abu Sayyaf leader as Abu Sulaiman, but police could not tell if this was the same person who heads a faction of the homegrown terrorist group in Mindanao.

"There have been no reported movements in Metro Manila," Ebdane told reporters.

"But we are ready. Terrorists are now more sophisticated. We can't just learn from previous incidents; we need to at least forecast potential targets," he said.

3-day mourning for Spain declared

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SAYING THE path to peace was through prayer, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday declared a three-day period of national prayer for the victims of last week's terrorist attack in Spain.

In Proclamation No. 578, the President declared March 15-17 a "period of national prayer and solidarity against terrorism in deep sympathy with the Spanish people and all humanity" for the "unspeakable tragedy" that befell many innocent passengers on Madrid's commuter trains.

Ms Macapagal also directed that flags at all government buildings and installations here and abroad be flown at half staff as a sign of mourning and solidarity with the Spaniards.

"Believing the path to peace is through prayer, I call on our countrymen to go to their churches, mosques and other places of worship on these days to pray to the Almighty for the victims and to help the world in this scourge of terrorism," the President said.

"The Filipino people join the Spanish people and all humanity in their grief for the loss of their loved ones and the injuries and damage caused by the unprecedented terrorist attack on March 11, 2004 on the Atocha Station, El Pozo Station and Sta. Eugenia Station in Madrid, Spain," she added.

She said that all peace-loving peoples of the world condemned the "dastardly and deplorable" act of terrorism that killed 192 people and wounded over 1,600 others.

The President said the grief of countless families would be felt for a long time and prayed that they would find peace through the grace of God.

AGLIPAYAN BLESSING
President Macapagal-Arroyo receives blessing and support from Aglipayan Archbishop Felicito Aguisandro in Panabo City, Davao del Norte. VAL HANDUMON

Task Force 156 a dud–OSS staff

SPTF head denies charge, cites filing of 11 cases

By Michelle V. Remo

EMPLOYEES of the One-Stop Shop Tax Credit and Duty Drawback Center (OSS) have lashed out at the presidential task force created to go after tax credit cheats, saying it had failed to fulfill its mandate in its four years of existence.

The OSS, a unit under the Department of Finance created to process tax credit claims, also questioned the manner by which Special Presidential Task Force 156 (SPTF) utilized government funds.

'Dismal' record

The OSS personnel charged that the SPTF's "dismal" performance was not commensurate with its P2-million monthly budget and staff of fewer than 20.

They said that of the 56 companies suspected of tax credit fraud, only 17 had been officially charged by the SPTF.

They added that 39 other companies allegedly involved in tax fraud cases worth a total of P3.174 billion had not been charged by the task force.

Real masterminds

"We strongly feel that for the SPTF to effectively achieve its mandate, the focus of its investigative resources and capability should have been to identify and expose the real masterminds behind these scams. Sadly, this has not happened," said the 109 OSS staffers who signed a memorandum, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER.

The INQUIRER tried to reach Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong for comment but she was out of her office.

It also tried to reach SPTF alternate chair Inocencio Ferrer Jr., who is also DOF undersecretary for domestic finance group, but his office referred this reporter to SPTF executive director Alan Ventura.

Accomplishments

Ventura, who became SPTF head in 2001, said the OSS staffers were merely trying to draw attention away from the charges against them.

He said the task force actually filed 11 cases in the first two years of his term.

"We have accomplished a lot. It is expected of them (OSS) to create issues against the task force because we have filed cases against employees of the OSS in connection with a tax credit scam," he said.

Charged

Ernesto Hiansen, OSS executive director, together with other agency staffers, have been charged by the task force with involvement in the fraudulent use of tax credit certificates (TCC) worth P24 million.

Hiansen and his staff had earlier tagged the charges filed against them as unfair, saying it was their investigation that uncovered the latest tax credit scam involving P24 million worth of allegedly fraudulent TCCs sold by Rohm Electronics Inc. to Nissan Motors Corp. and Splash Manufacturing Corp.

The TCCs were then allegedly used to offset Nissan's and Splash's tax obligations to the government.

P56-M budget

The OSS staffers said the charges were meant to discredit their efforts at exposing cases of tax credit fraud.

They said the government had given the SPTF a budget of P56 million since 1999, or about P14 million per year.

With only 17 companies charged, the OSS members said, the cost of each case filed by the SPTF came to P3.2 million.

Only P11M recovered

The OSS members also said that of the P5.3-billion worth of tax credit certificates fraudulently used by syndicates and which the government had yet to get back, only P11 million had been actually recovered.

"This implies a measly recovery rate of only 0.02 percent," said the OSS staff.

Inter-agency unit

The SPTF is an inter-agency unit established by Malacañang in 1999 to investigate and prosecute irregularities committed in government agencies involved in processing tax credit claims, such as the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the Bureau of Customs and the OSS.

It is composed of representatives from the OSS, the DOF, the National Bureau of Investigation and the Office of the President.

NBI: Hiansen no whistle-blower

By Leila B. Salaverria

ERNESTO Hiansen is no whistle blower.

This was the contention of National Bureau of Investigation Anti-Graft chief Atty. Jose Justo Yap, who said Hiansen is still among those charged in the P21 million tax credit certificate (TCC) scam.

Yap said the alleged crime had already been committed when Hiansen produced documents pertinent to the scam. Hiansen had approved the transfer of the fraudulent TCCs which were used to pay off tax obligations amounting to P21 million.

Hiansen, the executive director of the One-Stop Shop (OSS) Center of the Department of Finance, was among the 28 people charged before the Office of the Ombudsman for the scam. He earlier claimed that he shouldn't be included in the charge because he was among those who discovered and exposed the scam.

Yap said that since Hiansen is a member of the executive committee of the Special Presidential Task Force 156, he is mandated to investigate and prosecute tax scams and is under obligation to submit pertinent documents to the task force.

Yap also said that since the alleged irregularities were committed under Hiansen's watch, he was still liable. Besides, Hiansen failed to detect more than 10 irregularities present in the TCCs submitted for his signature. When the TCCs were submitted to the bureau's Questioned Documents Division, 16 anomalies were found in the documents.

TCCs are as good as cash and issued when a company or a manufacturer is entitled to a tax refund. They can also be transferred or sold to other companies with a 5 percent discount.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco also said yesterday that Task Force 156 had asked the bureau, in a letter dated Feb. 24, to file charges against those liable for the tax scam because one of those involved is Hiansen, a task force member.

After the charges were filed, several government agencies, including the Bureau of Internal Revenue Commissioner, the head of the Anti-Money Laundering Council, and the head of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission, were informed about the case.

Wycoco added that Hiansen's case should not be compared to Acsa Ramirez's because in the former, Task Force 156 had approved the NBI's findings and even directed the bureau to file charges.

However, Yap said Hiansen was very cooperative when the matter was being investigated.

Law urged to protect whistle-blowers

SEN. MANUEL Villar Jr. yesterday scored the need for a law that would protect whistle-blowers from employers' retaliation. This would boost the government's efforts to eradicate the country's perennial problem of graft and corruption.

Villar, chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance, cited the case of Ernesto Hiansen of the Department of Finance, who now faces raps from the National Bureau of Investigation after blowing the whistle on a P24-million tax credit scandal.

"Employees working in public and private offices must realize their duty to inform the people about any wrongdoing or illegal activity. But they must be given adequate protection when they come forward," he said.

In a parallel move, the Philippine Government Employees Association has urged the Office of the President and both houses of congress to enact a law that will protect whistle-blowers.

According to PGEA president Esperanza S. Ocampo, they were alarmed by the case of Acsa Ramirez of the Land Bank tax scandal report and, more recently, Hiansen's case.

Ocampo said government employees who are privy to anomalies in government are afraid to come out in the open because investigators can implicate them to the crime.

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Top doctor to pursue US nursing job

From page A1

wages because of the absence of similar opportunities here.

Already a registered nurse who graduated cum laude before he entered medical school, Jacinto has a pending application for a nursing job in a New York hospital. He applied for the job 10 months before taking the medical board exams in February.

The son of retired public school teachers, Jacinto was accompanied to the ceremony by his aunt Nanet Reyes, a Marikina City-based nun, and his only sibling Jowie, a fireman.

The articulate bachelor earlier said he originally wanted to be a writer. But he proved to be an engaging speaker, delivering his piece like a seasoned orator complete with hand gestures.

Anecdotes

The speech he wrote, however, was silent about his plans to become a nurse abroad and mainly played up anecdotes from his life as a high school student, a "volunteer" nurse in Lamitan, and as a "failing" medical student in his early years.

He recalled how a fire that razed his neighborhood in 1992 destroyed his high school textbooks and notes—"the most important things I lost"—and almost caused him to flunk his finals.

"After college, I was detailed at the Dr. Jose Ma. Torres Hospital and did volunteer work for the Lamitan District Hospital," he continued.

"There, I reflected in quiet moments at the porch, occasionally interrupted by a hysterical mother clutching on to her ill infant or a wounded soldier being wheeled into the emergency room."

Recounting the days when he was at his "lowest point in med school," he said he was so scared he would lose his scholarship when he got a zero in his first anatomy practical exams and a 45/100 score in his biochemistry exams.

Jacinto then asked his fellow inductees to treat their future patients as if they were their own parents or siblings. "Together let us make history immortalize us, the purpose-driven healers who practiced Real Life, instruments of Jesus, the greatest healer. The world will know how great we can become," he said.

Without directly citing Jacinto's case, two key speakers in the program acknowledged the "phenomenon" of Filipino doctors choosing to become nurses in order to get secure jobs that paid more.

Economic

"'Some of us feel it's a disgrace, but we also recognize that it's driven by economic imperatives," said Dr. Jose Ramirez, chair of the Professional Regulation Commission's Board of Medicine.

While saying that the career switch amounted to a "waste of the medical education resources of the country," Ramirez said he did not begrudge them the right to seek better fortunes overseas. He nevertheless ended his piece with an appeal obviously addressed to other possible Elmer Jacintos in the crowd.

"Please try to make it in this country," he said, stressing that impoverished areas, especially in the provinces, continued to need the services of health professionals."

The keynote speaker, opposition senatorial candidate Aquilino Pimentel Jr., added: "As Dr. Ramirez said, we cannot begrudge you but only appeal to you to stay."

Pimentel said Jacinto's case represented a "terrible indictment of the state of our society, where very competent professionals, young and adventurous, would feel the need to take another course to escape dire conditions. We cannot blame him, but still, it's a sad commentary on the state of our society."

Philippine Medical Association president Dr. Jose T. Sanchez, on the other hand, said it was "definitely" an inherent right of an individual (to pursue) self-preservation and economic security.

Jacinto's story "should remind our lawmakers and national officials to give the best opportunity to those left behind and who have continuing faith in the system, by improving working conditions for our health care workers and not creating a hostile environment (for them)," he said.

Reality check

Asked whether he thought Jacinto's story might discourage potential medicine enrolees, Sanchez replied: "We have to face reality."

Told of Ramirez's and Pimentel's appeals, Jacinto pointed out that he had "already served in the barrios" when he worked as a nurse in two hospitals in Lamitan, where his patients included government soldiers wounded in jungle encounters with Moro rebels.

"For me that was enough," he said. "Maybe, just maybe, I would be able to come back soon to continue that service. But it's time that I also served myself."

Pro-US gov't of Aznar ousted in Spain polls

From page A1

seen as a repudiation of Aznar and his close bonds with US President George W. Bush. It also posed a new problem for the US-led occupation force in Iraq, where Spain has 1,300 troops, because the Socialists have said they will withdraw them in the absence of a clear UN mandate.

Rage at the government overshadowed Election Day. Protesters shouted "Liar!" and "Get our troops out of Iraq!" at the Popular Party candidate Mariano Rajoy, the 48-year-old lawyer who had been expected to be Aznar's successor, as he voted at a Madrid polling station.

Zapatero

Zapatero, the 43-year-old lawyer who will become prime minister, accepted victory at his party's campaign headquarters by asking for a moment of silence for the bombing victims.

He called for "restrained euphoria" in light of the bombings, which killed 200 people and wounded 1,500 on four commuter trains in Madrid on Thursday.

"Terror should know that it has all of us in front of it and we will conquer it," he said. "I will lead a quiet change. I will govern for all in unity. And power will not change me, I promise you that."

In his speech conceding defeat, Rajoy praised Zapatero as a "worthy opponent" and pledged that the Popular Party would be "a loyal opposition always serving the interests of Spain." Aznar, who had handpicked Rajoy as his successor, stood solemnly at his side.

The arrest of three Moroccans and two Indians and an official announcement, just hours before the polls opened, of a videotape in which a man claimed that al-Qaida had carried out the bombings prompted accusations that the government was lying when it claimed that the violent Basque separatist movement ETA was most likely responsible.

Last November, Zapatero called for the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq after the death of seven Spanish secret service agents in an ambush. More recently, he softened his position, saying that if he won the election, he would withdraw the troops at the end of June unless a UN-led force took charge.

Zapatero also said during the campaign that Aznar's government had slavishly followed the United States, deepened European divisions over the war and damaged Spain's relationship with France and Germany.

The governing party "has gambled everything on its blind support for the United States, or rather the Bush administration, at the price of weakening the bond between Spain and Europe," he said in January.

Election figures

According to official election figures, the Socialists won 43 percent of the vote and 164 seats in the 350-member Chamber of Deputies; the Popular Party won 38 percent of the vote and 148 seats.

Both the Popular Party and the biggest left-wing party, United Left, lost support to the Socialists. In 2000, the Popular Party won 183 seats, compared with 125 for the Socialists.

The Socialists were short of the 176 seats to have a majority necessary to form a government, which means it must create a coalition with another party or parties.

Aznar will remain the head of government until a new government is formed, which, under complicated electoral rules and the Constitution, could take about three months.

The turnout was higher than expected. More than 77 percent of the country's 35 million eligible voters cast ballots, compared with 55 percent four years ago. In Madrid, the figure was 80 percent.

In a television appearance on Saturday night, Rajoy alienated some voters when he called spontaneous antigovernment rallies that brought thousands of people to the streets of Madrid "serious antidemocratic events that never before happened in the history of our democracy." He added, "Their aim is to influence and pressure the will of voters throughout the day of reflection."

At a polling station in Cozlada, a tight-knit working class suburb east of Madrid where all four of the attacked trains had passed, there seemed not to be one person who did not know someone who had died.

Wrong war

"Our prime minister has gotten us into a terrible, completely wrong war," Vanessa Bellon, a 23-year-old preschool teacher with a piercing near her lower lip, said as she voted there for the United Left Party. "And because of it, I spent yesterday and today going to funerals. I am thinking of a 3-year-old child at my school who no longer has a mother."

That anger was echoed in the trendy Calle Fuencarral neighborhood of central Madrid. "We've enough of this government," said Nayra Delgado, a 31-year-old documentary filmmaker who voted for the Socialists. "It's too much. They think they are kings in this country."

At El Pozo train station, where one of the attacks occurred, the walls were covered with graffiti that read, "Aznar Killer," and "No to Terrorism." Red candles and bouquets of flowers were haphazardly arranged in tribute to the victims. Just across the street, the polling station was set up in a school, some of whose students had lost parents in the attacks.

"I certainly did not vote for the Popular Party," said a 79-year-old retired carpenter who identified himself only as Julian. "My daughter's hand was cut off, and she almost lost a part of her leg. Aznar should come here to see that, to see these people. But he did nothing for us. He did nothing for the poor. He is one who brought us to war. I went through the civil war, and the postwar. But this is worse."

A 26-year-old window frame maker, who identified himself only as David, said he had changed his vote from Popular Party to Socialist because of the bombings and the war in Iraq. "Maybe the Socialists will get our troops out of Iraq, and al-Qaida will forget about Spain, so we will be less frightened," he said. "A bit of us died in the train."

Addressing both Aznar and Rajoy, he said, "I tell them, come to our neighborhoods, we will tell you some things about life, about these poor people who died."

Stability, not change

In conservative pockets of the country, people argued that stability, not change, was needed at this time of crisis. In the 12th-century, walled hilltop city of Avila, the hometown of St. Teresa, voters said they had cast their ballots as they always did—for the Popular Party.

The election of the prime minister involved a complicated process in which voters did not vote for one candidate but for one party list of candidates for deputies in Parliament.

Voters had the choice of 28 party lists, including mainstream parties like the Popular and Socialist parties and tiny ones like the leftist Communist Party of the Peoples of Spain and the rightist Falange, which opposes immigration and supports the memory of the late dictator Franco.

There was little chance of secret ballots; lists were laid out on open tables in polling stations. *Reports from AP and The New York Times*

Sotto says voters . . .

From page A1

"If others call him (Poe) the next president, we would call him differently because of his love for our fellow Filipinos," said Sotto, Poe's personal campaign manager. "We will call him the president who will obey the people."

What the people need is a "person who understands the feelings of the ordinary Filipino," according to Sotto. The senator said Poe "knows how to love, is pleasant, and is not involved in any scandal."

Sotto also addressed criticisms by Poe's rivals, including President Macapagal-Arroyo, that Poe, a high school dropout, had no experience to qualify him to lead the country.

"This (Poe) is the one who has the real experience," Sotto said. " Who can beat the experience of an 11-year-old child whose father died, and this child turning out to be the breadwinner?" he said.

"Even if Poe did not finish high school, he was able to put up several businesses and became a pillar in one of the biggest industries in the country today," Sotto said, referring to the actor's rise as the "king" of local movies.

Poe has been criticized for not being able to present a concrete platform of government.

But on March 9, his camp released a 24-page pamphlet outlining what he intends to do if elected.

What the country needs is a leader who not only uses his brains but his heart as well, Poe had told his volunteers after the public release of the document, adding that without a heart, all other qualifications were useless.

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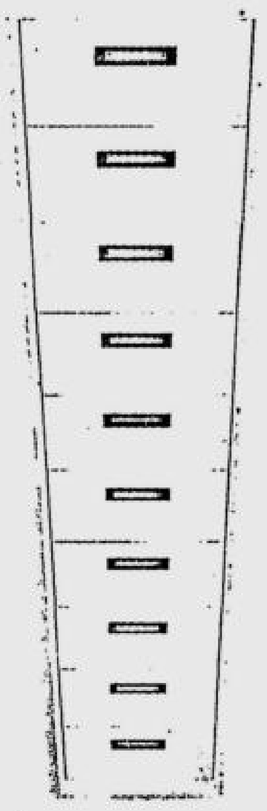

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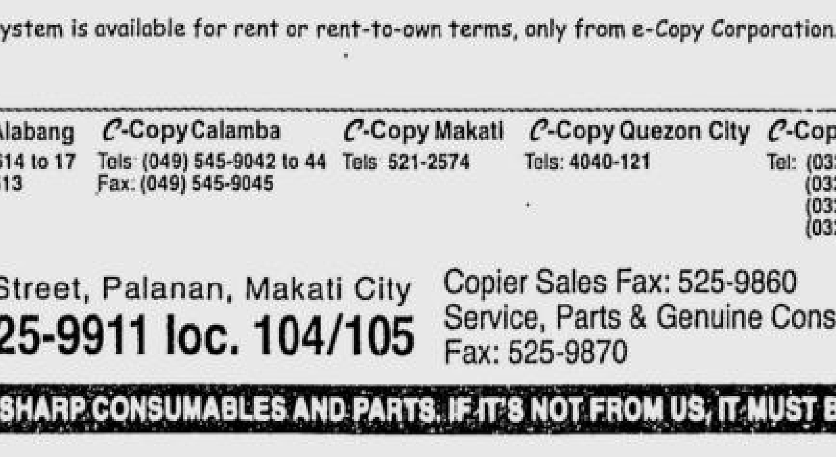

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Tito says KNP support meant to oust 'Queen'

From page A1

only for the duration of the election period.

"I do so mainly because almost everyone agrees that the nation must change, that the socioeconomic downturn must reverse...and the cauldron of corruption stifled by example," Guingona said of his decision to cast his lot with the opposition standard-bearer.

He told reporters he had neither been offered nor did he seek any government position if Poe won the May elections.

"It's only up to May 10 and perhaps a few days more during the counting period," he said, when asked how long he would be Poe's adviser.

Guingona said he had also quit as chair of Bangon!, a non-partisan, nationalist, reform-oriented multi-sectoral movement launched last November.

Speaker Jose de Venecia said that Guingona had tarnished his place in history by switching sides to Poe, and that he and former President Fidel Ramos had tried to dissuade the vice president from making the move.

"We tried our best; we tried to show our friendship for him by making an appeal to him not to make this fatal mistake because his image as a statesman as he exits into history is confirmed," De Venecia said on ANC television.

"This image is now jeopardized because of this position he has taken."

De Venecia also questioned how effective a Poe-Guingona alliance would be.

"The platform of Tito Guingona is very much left of center," he said. "I don't know whether that will benefit Fernando Poe, who sometimes takes a rightist position or a centrist position."

To Senate President Franklin Drilon, it may all be a matter of politics.

"It is quite ironic that now Vice President Guingona is in the same camp as the defenders of President Erap (Estrada) then, whom we were fighting when we were in the minority," Drilon told reporters.

Drilon said it was Guingona, as a senator, who had instigated Estrada's fall from power with his famous "I accuse" speech linking the former president to jueteng operations.

"As I said, this is a political reality that we have to accept," he said.

He also said Guingona's defection had to be accepted as "a fact of politics," noting that the vice president's wife and a son were running for office under Poe's Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino banner.

Guingona's wife, Ruth, is running for mayor of Gingoog City while his son, Teofisto III, is seeking a congressional seat in Bukidnon.

"Therefore, we had expected that since the family of Tito Guingona has already been designated as official candidates of the KNP, it was just a matter of time before the vice president formally moved over," he said.

Drilon said senators in the next Congress planned to push again for the enactment of the Political Reform Act, "which hopefully will impose rules on turncoatism."

He said the proposed law would prohibit turncoatism and punish turncoats.

Guingona, at a press conference, said he accepted Poe's proposal to be his adviser on governance and public policy after the actor agreed to adopt his proposed reforms.

These include the enactment of a law banning political dynasties, greater autonomy for local officials, protection of the national patrimony, a strong drive against crime and corruption, creation of a fund for Filipino overseas workers, and efforts to make Filipinos proud of themselves.

Guingona said that after quitting as foreign affairs secretary and forming Bangon!, he had offered his eight-point program of government to President Macapagal-Arroyo but she did nothing about it.

Since they became estranged, the President had never consulted him on major national issues, he added.

The Vice President said he had no personal rancor for Ms Macapagal and he hoped they "could continue working together even if we are apart...for the good of the country."

As adviser to Poe, Guingona said he would not directly campaign for KNP but would only help prepare Poe to become a good president. His support for the KNP candidates would be "implied" because if they won, they would be implementing Poe's platform.

One of his concerns, Guingona said, would be the formulation of policies that would obtain votes for Poe in Mindanao, "a crucial area" which should be unified so that its potential for progress could be realized.

"Poe asserts that he is his own man," Guingona said of criticisms that Poe was growing increasingly reliant on advisers.

He said Poe had a native intelligence and the capacity to learn quickly.

"It's a campaign issue that FPJ would have to answer and refute," he added.

The Vice President also said the candidacies of his wife and son did not have anything to do with his decision to support Poe. *With reports from Christine Avendaño*

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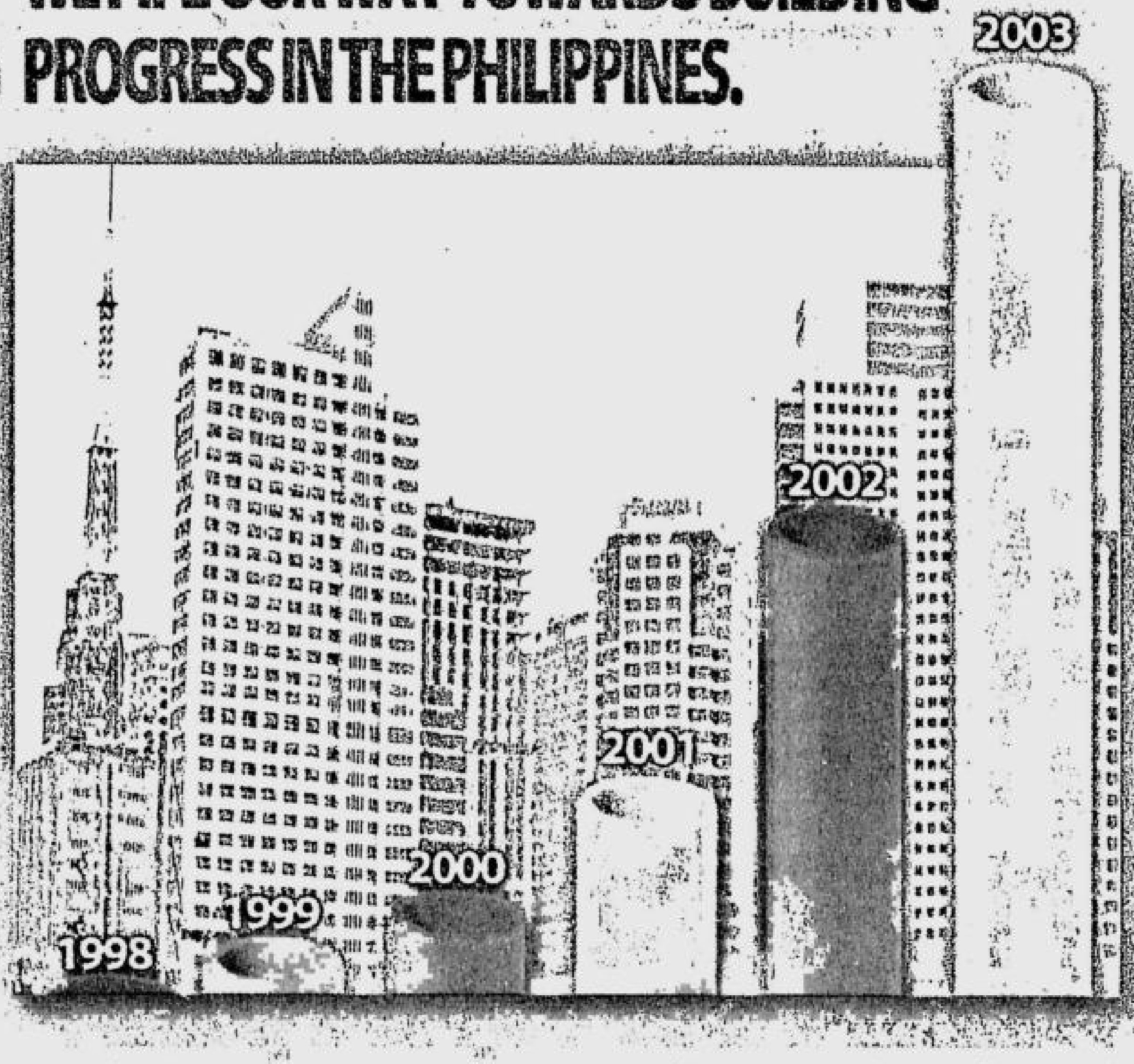

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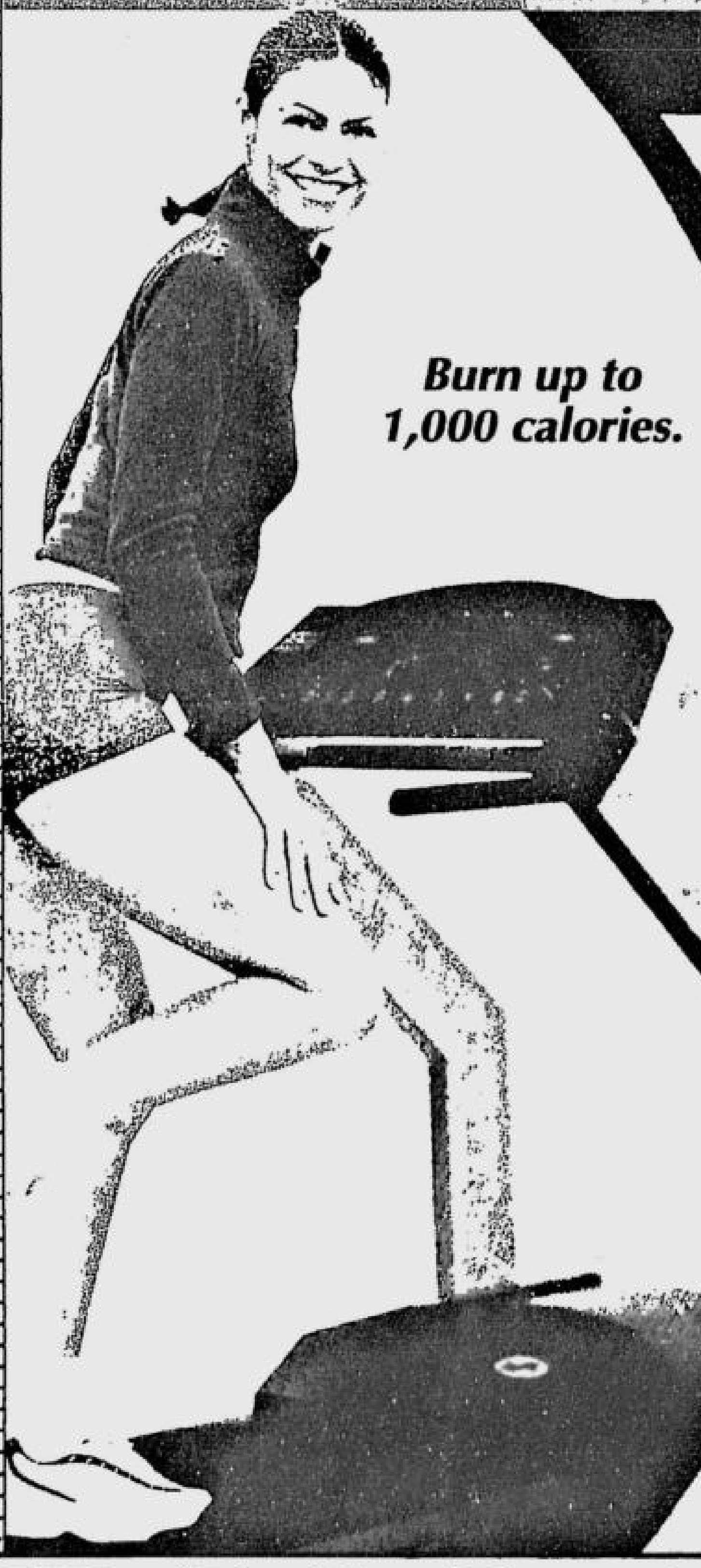

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RP troops will remain in Iraq despite threats, says GMA

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday Philippine troops would remain in Iraq despite the renewed threat of terrorist attacks in the aftermath of the Spanish train blasts.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said it was too early to blame the surprise defeat of the conservatives in Spain's elections on Sunday on a reaction to the country's support for the invasion of Iraq.

There has been speculation the socialist victory, coming on the heels of last week's terrorist attacks in Madrid, would erode support for the US-led occupation of Iraq. The Spanish socialists had pledged during their campaign to bring back Spanish troops posted in Iraq.

"There may be other factors that affected the outcome of the Spanish elections and we do not wish to comment on detail on what really happened," Bunye said.

"As far as the Philippine position on Iraq is concerned, we have not seen any nor have detected any change in the posture of the Philippine government," he said.

The security forces in the Philippines, one of Washington's staunchest anti-terror allies in Southeast Asia, are on alert to head off similar attacks, Bunye said.

"The terrorists have been known to strike their known opponents, but also they strike at the soft target. So what we should do is to keep our guard up at all times," he said.

Bunye said the Philippines would continue to work with the new Spanish government to preserve the "long historical and cultural ties between the Philippines and Spain." The Philippines was once a Spanish colony.

Calls have been mounting, however, for the Philippines to immediately repatriate its 96-man contingent serving with Polish troops south of Baghdad.

Manuel Villar, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said well-organized terrorist attacks endangered the Filipinos.

"It is alarming to note that the government does not have a clear plan on what to do with the volunteers in Iraq, who were supposed to come home more than two weeks ago," Villar said. *AFP*

A MEMBER of the Philippine contingent to Iraq stands guard at the Ishtar gate in the ancient city of Babylon, 100 kms south of Baghdad. Photo was taken on Sept. 28, 2003. AFP

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, March 16, 2004
3rd Week of Lent

1st Reading: Dan 3:25, 34-43
Gospel: Mt 18:21-35

Peter asked Jesus, "Lord, how many times must I forgive the offenses of my brother or sister? Seven times?" Jesus answered, "No, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

"This story throws light on the kingdom of heaven. A king decided to settle the accounts of his servants. Among the first was one who owed him ten thousand gold ingots. As the man could not repay the debt, the king commanded that he be sold as a slave with his wife, children and all his goods in payment.

"The official threw himself at the feet of the king and said, 'Give me time, and I will pay you back everything.' The king took pity on him and not only set him free but even canceled his debt.

"This official then left the king's presence and he met one of his companions who owed him a hundred pieces of silver. He grabbed him by the neck and almost strangled him, shouting, 'Pay me what you owe!' His companion threw himself at his feet and asked him, 'Give me time, and I will pay everything.' The other did not agree, but sent him to prison until he had paid all his debt. His companions saw what happened. They were indignant and so they went and reported everything to their lord. Then the lord summoned his official and said, 'Wicked servant, I forgave you all that you owed when you begged me to do so. Weren't you bound to have pity on your companion as I had pity on you?' The lord was now angry, so he handed his servant over to be punished, until he had paid his whole debt."

Jesus added, "So will my heavenly Father do with you unless each of you sincerely forgive your brother or sister."

Commentary

A very important list to compile: a list of the people I find it hard to forgive. (I must make sure that the list includes myself—often the hardest person to forgive.) Joko Beck wrote, "Failing to grasp the importance of forgiveness is always part of any failing relationship and a factor in our anxieties, depressions and illnesses-in all our troubles. Our failure to know joy is a direct reflection of our inability to forgive. Non-forgiveness is rooted in our habit of thinking self-centered thoughts. When we believe in such thoughts, they are like a drop of poison in our glass of water."

I've been struck by the fact that the word "give" is part of the word "forgive," not only in English but in several languages. Italian: donare/perdonare; French: donner/pardonner; German: geben/vergeben; Norwegian: gi/tilgi; and probably etc.! To give is to go beyond the care of the self-centered self; to forgive is to do the same, but in a way that is deeper and more personal.

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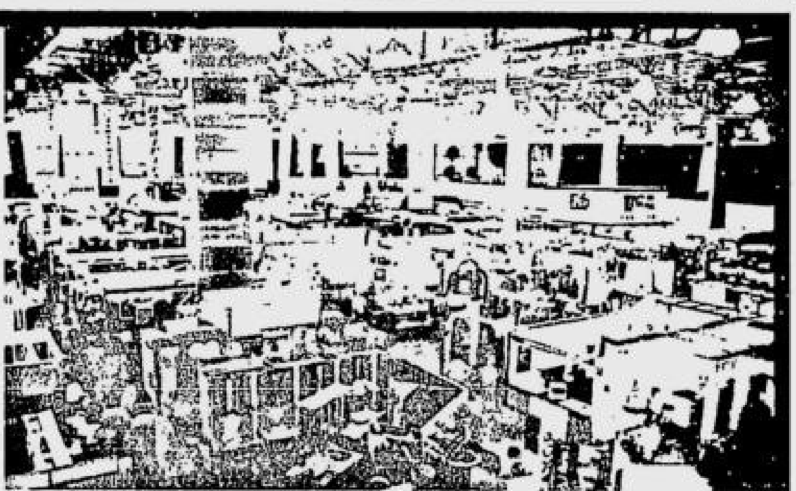

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Coast Guard asks NBI to identify SuperFerry 14 victims

By Leila Salaverria

THE PHILIPPINE Coast Guard has asked the National Bureau of Investigation to identify the bodies and body parts recovered from the ill-fated SuperFerry 14 ship which is now half-submerged in Mariveles, Bataan.

The task was turned over to the bureau because it has the capacity to perform procedures like matching dental records and checking DNA to accurately identify bodies and body parts, said PCG spokesperson Lt. Armand Balilo yesterday. Heading the technical and forensic team of the NBI are Deputy Director Samuel Fiji and Dr. Isabel Pagulayan.

Balilo said that when all of the bodies or body parts have been identified, a more accurate count of the fatalities in the SuperFerry 14 could be made. As of last count, 33 whole bodies have been recovered from the ship. The rest were body parts.

Yesterday at 2 p.m., eight more body parts were recovered from the Superferry 14, said Commodore Wilfredo Tamayo.

He estimated that eight percent of the 10,000-ton ship has yet to be searched and that operations on the A-deck of the ship would probably be finished by Wednesday.

Rescue workers, including members of the Philippine Navy are going over parts of the ship that have already been searched, just in case they missed something. Heavy debris covering the remaining parts of the ship, as well as strong winds, big waves and murky waters have hampered the divers' efforts.

"We may have to check for contamination of the water," Tamayo said in a phone interview yesterday. He added that rescue workers are still working round the clock to ensure that all bodies and body parts would be retrieved from the SuperFerry 14.

The SuperFerry 14 was on its way to Bacolod and Cagayan de Oro on Feb. 27 when it caught fire near Corregidor Island. It was carrying 899 passengers and crew members on board.

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Top PNP spook disputes Abu role on ship fire

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE THEORY that an Abu Sayyaf suicide bomber was behind the Feb. 27 Super Ferry 14 explosion appears to be sinking.

The alleged bomber, Abu Muadz alias Arnulfo Alvarado, has been long dead, according to Director Robert Delfin, police director for intelligence.

Quoting another Abu member detained in Camp Crame, Delfin said Muadz was killed during an encounter with government troops in Mindanao sometime in 2000.

The revelation, he said, only showed that top Abu leaders Khadaffy Janjalani and Abu Sulaiman were merely "bluffing" when they claimed that the 33-year-old Muadz had blown up the ferry.

However, an earlier report in the INQUIRER quoted former Moro rebels in Basilan as saying that there are three persons carrying the name Abu Muadz.

'Passenger 51'

Within a week after the explosion, Janjalani and Sulaiman announced in separate interviews that their group had planted the alleged suicide bomber as "passenger 51" at the blue room of Cabin R.

"For me, if the explosion was the handiwork of terrorists, the blast should not have been isolated," Delfin told reporters. "There should have been more than one explosion to sink the ship instantly."

Investigators from the Bureau of Fire Protection are not sold to the suicide-bombing theory, noting the absence of twisted metals that would indicate a bomb explosion at the SuperFerry 14.

At a hearing of the Board of Marine Inquiry, ship captain Ceferino Manzo said he smelled gunpowder at the entire tourist section of the ship. Steward Alvin Reyes also testified that the same section smelled of "New Year."

Task force

But investigators later focused on the possibility that the blast had been caused by the gas pipeline or the ongoing welding work on the ship's air-conditioning system.

While authorities were yet to complete investigation, Malacañang has formed a special task force to secure the country's seaports against terrorist attacks.

Headed by the undersecretary of the Department of Transportation and Communication, the group will be composed of representatives from the Philippine National Police's Maritime Group, Coast Guard and the Navy.

The task force will be to seaports what another composite group is to airports, particularly the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, according to Delfin.

"Security in airports has long been in place," he said. "It's the seaports that we really need to secure now."

PNP: 45 dead, 100 hurt in run-up to May 10 elections

SHOOTINGS and bombs related to upcoming May 10 elections in the Philippines have left at least 45 people dead and more than 100 others injured, police said yesterday.

Police spokesperson Senior Supt. Joel Goltiao said the violence occurred between Dec. 15 and March 12, when police recorded 27 shooting incidents, six bombings and three communist rebel attacks. Among those killed were six local candidates, including two town mayors.

During congressional and municipal elections in 2001, Goltiao said there were 238 election-related incidents in which about 100 people were killed.

Recent polls put President Macapagal-Arroyo and opposition front-runner Fernando Poe Jr. nearly even in the race for president. *AP*

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Soldier, rebel killed in Bohol clash

By Chito A. Fuentes and Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

TAGBILARAN CITY—Troops clashed with communist guerrillas in Bohol over the weekend, leaving one rebel and one soldier dead.

Special forces troops and about 40 New People's Army rebels clashed on Sunday in Batuan town in Bohol, Army spokesperson Lt. Col. Joselito Kakilala said.

The rebels withdrew, leaving behind one dead, a .38 caliber revolver, a grenade and "subversive documents," Kakilala said.

In a separate clash Sunday, troops fought about 50 NPA rebels in Calamba town in Misamis Occidental, but no casualties were reported, Kakilala said.

Maj. Raul Mendez, 302nd Infantry Brigade civilian military operations officer, identified the slain soldier as Sgt. Medardo Modelo of the Army's 28th Special Forces (SF) Company based in Bilar town.

Modelo, of Hinigaran town Negros Occidental, was hit in the chest during the firefight with communist rebels at Sitio Cansingi, Barangay San Jose Batuan town, about 70 kilometers northwest of this city.

Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado, citing police and military reports, said Modelo lost a lot of blood and died while being transported to the town proper.

Cansingi, a remote mountain village some 10 km from the town proper, has only about six houses and sits near boundary with Catigbian town.

5th encounter

Mendez said the dead rebel was identified only by his nom-de-guerre "Ka Alvin."

Yesterday's clash was the second in nine days and the fifth since the start of the year.

On March 5, soldiers surprised a rebel group in Sitio Ipo, Barangay Liboron, Catigbian town, killing two rebels, including NPA Central Visayas spokesperson Silvino Clamucha.

Mendez said about 25 soldiers from the 28th SF Company, led by Lt. Johnny Bayog, went to Sitio Cansingi to check on reports that communist rebels had encamped at the village.

The government troopers found about 40 rebels, relaxing in their makeshift camp.

SPO2 Gamaliel Merlas of the Batuan police station said the firefight broke out at about 5:30 a.m. and lasted until 8 a.m.

Recovered from the scene were a fragmentation grenade, one short firearm, ammunition for M-14 and Garand rifles and subversive documents.

Mendez said Sunday's encounter was proof that the people had grown tired of the rebel presence.

"If you will note, the increasing incidence of the encounters show the kind of information we get from the civilian populace," he said.

Both Mendez and Merlas said it was possible that the rebel group in yesterday's clash was part of Clamucha's group that clashed with soldiers in Catigbian on March 5.

Stepped up attacks

The 9,000-strong NPA rebel army, which has been fighting for a Marxist state for 35 years, has recently stepped up attacks ahead of the May 10 presidential election. The rebels say they want to bring down President Macapagal-Arroyo's government because of its strong ties with the United States, which considers the NPA a terrorist organization.

Last month, the government and the rebels resumed Norwegian-mediated negotiations but failed to agree to a ceasefire or to the insurgents' demand that they be dropped from US and European terror lists. *With an AP report*

GREEN FOOD FEST
Environmental activists eat spring rolls, chicken rolls and popular native delicacy of rice rolls during an organic food festival organized by Greenpeace outside the Department of Agriculture's office in Quezon City, Monday. Greenpeace aimed to demonstrate to the government that consumers need not be exposed to "unnecessary risks" by genetically engineered seeds, crops or food because there are available alternatives. Greenpeace also batted for a worldwide mandatory labeling of genetically modified organisms in food. ROMEO GACAD/AFP

Gov't troops, Moro rebels to secure team of Malaysian ceasefire monitors

GOVERNMENT troopers and Moro rebels will secure a team of Malaysian ceasefire observers who are expected to arrive in the country next week, the military said yesterday.

In a press conference in Camp Aguinaldo, Armed Forces of the Philippines Vice Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia said the Moro Islamic Liberation Front would secure the team in certain areas designated for their inspections while the military will serve as security of the team outside of these areas.

"Principally, the security would come from the AFP because the only involvement of the MILF as far as the security would be concerned would be in the 11 designated areas where the Malaysian advance survey team would be going. Outside of those consultations in some pre-agreed upon places, it would be the AFP which would be securing the Malaysians."

Nine Malaysians would fly into Manila on Monday, after general elections in Kuala Lumpur, to assess their assignment and receive briefings from both camps, Garcia said.

The main body of monitors, comprising soldiers from a number of Organization of the Islamic Conference members and also led by Malaysia, "would be expected very soon after the survey team had made its ground assessment."

He said the advance party would stay for nine days and travel to Mindanao, where the MILF has been waging a low-level armed campaign for 25 years to set up an Islamic state.

The arrival of the main body of monitors is expected shortly before Kuala Lumpur hosts peace talks between President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration and the MILF in late April.

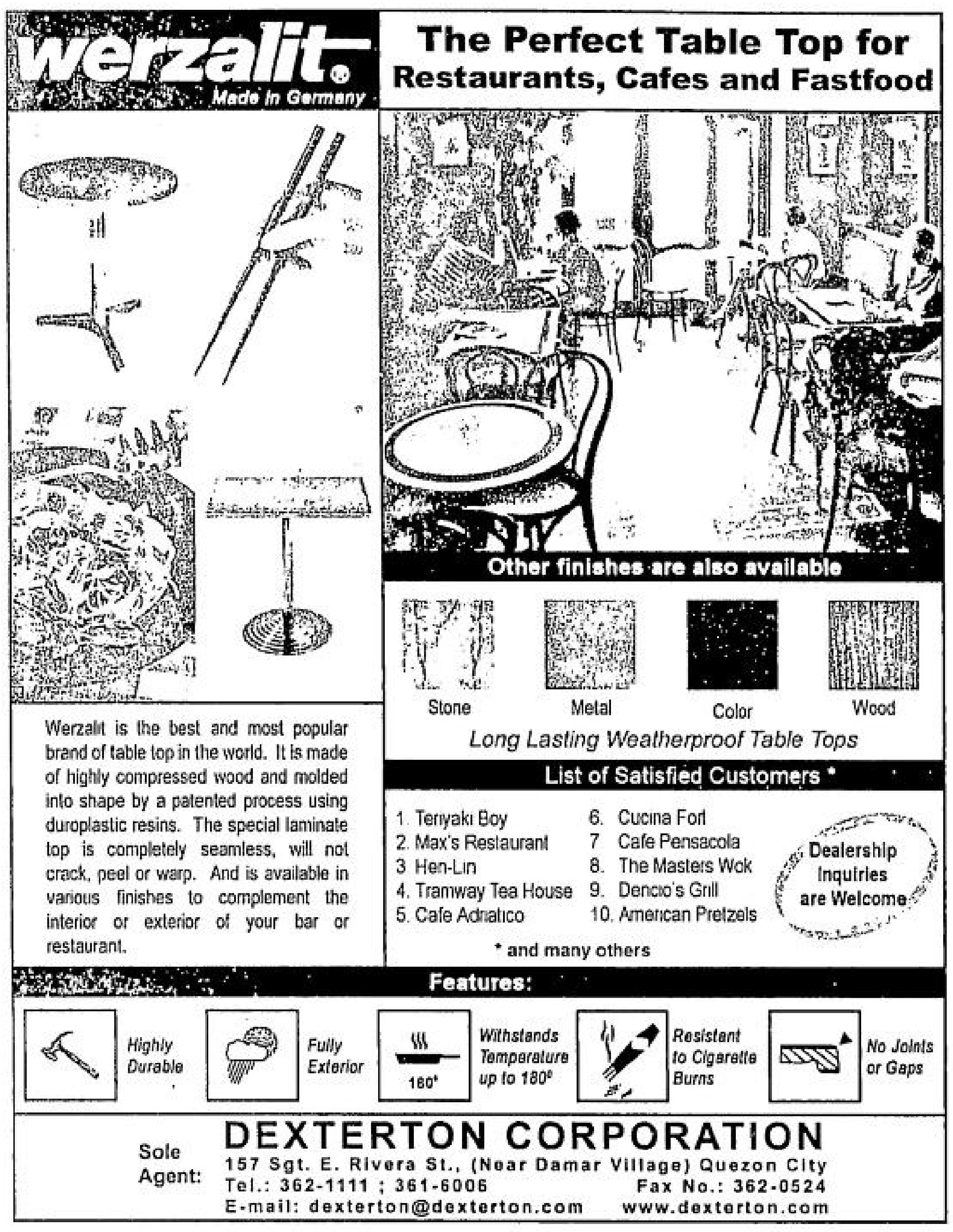
Garcia told reporters the advance party would receive separate briefings at military as well as MILF camps on Mindanao.

The two sides have been observing a ceasefire since July last year, but fighting flared last week when government troops overran a guerrilla camp and found the bodies of two dead men.

"The arrival of the international monitoring team would enhance in a very great way the ceasefire that now exists on the ground," Garcia said.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu had earlier said the team was due to arrive on March 14.

Among the areas set to be visited by the team are Zamboanga del Sur, Davao del Norte, Sultan Kudarat province, Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, and Lanao del Norte province. *Reports from Alcuin Papa and AFP*



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Osmeña's Obstructionism

By President Francisco Nemenzo, University of the Philippines

Senator John Osmeña's paid advertisement (*Inquirer*, March 4) confirmed our worst suspicion that unbridled malice has obscured his reasoning, to the point of holding back the country's leading university and sacrificing the welfare of its constituents.

For eight months, we worked hard for the passage of Senate Bill 2587—a bill to update our century-old Charter—which would have allowed UP to pay realistic salaries, improve its system of governance, and generate more resources to augment its budget.

Thanks to John Osmeña's capricious .and unreasonable demands, the UP Charter bill failed to be voted on when the Senate adjourned its session last February 6. Unless the Senate finds the opportunity and the will to take it up again in May, Osmeña's stonewalling may very well have laid to waste a decade of painstaking legislative effort.

His message'"To the UP Community" makes it appear that he has substantive and unanswered objections to the new Charter. Instead of playing hide-and-seek for months, why did he not raise those questions on the floor and ask us to respond? The other senators openly raised questions that we answered through Sen. Francis Pangilinan, the bill's principal sponsor. And we gladly worked out amendments to meet their constructive suggestions.

In his paid ad he cites as objectionable provisions of the existing Charter! He also repeats his unfounded criticisms of UP that we had already refuted several times with empirical data—which he conveniently ignores. (The Charter documents, including Sen. Osmeña's unedited advertisement and our point-by-point rebuttal, are on our website at *www.up.edu.ph*.)

Contrary to Osmeña's claim, it was never our goal to put UP above the law. We are only asking for a law that recognizes its uniqueness as the national university and gives it the autonomy to function as such. For UP to catch up with its counterparts in Asia, it should not be required to operate like any government bureaucracy. Since the government lacks the money for UP's modernization, it should be given greater flexibility to manage its idle and potential assets.

There is nothing sinister about this bill. But his long immersion in *trapo* culture—in which he deserves an honorary doctorate—has made John Osmeña thoroughly cynical, believing that everyone thinks like him, on the basis of selfish interest. Thus he puts forward the utterly preposterous charge that I am pushing for a new Charter in order to arrange for myself a handsome retirement package. This is what he means by "Nemenzo's Greed," the original title of his badly written piece on the Senate website, before it appeared as a paid ad.

In the first place, the present Charter already authorizes the Board of Regents to sef the salary of the UP President. I do not need a new Charter to achieve the devious intention he ascribes to me.

For the public's information, my basic pay as UP president is a glorious P35,000 a month. Many of our fresh graduates earn more than this. If I had just wanted a comfortable retirement, I should have accepted any one of several offers to sit on the board of large corporations or to accept tenured posts in universities abroad.

It is a salary scale like this that we are precisely seeking to improve through SB 2587 to enable UP retain the best and brightest on its faculty. This is not for me but for the thousands of professors and non-academic staff who will be serving UP long after I have retired. I have lived modestly all my life, as all who know me can attest to. My joys lie in good books and the challenges of the intellectual life. For a prosperous politician like John Osmeña to accuse a UP professor of'"greed" is pathetic in its hypocrisy.

Mr. Osmeña insists that I should have retired upon reaching the age of 65. But the law provides for an extension of service beyond 65 by the appropriate authorities in meritorious cases. Pursuant to the University Code, the Board of Regents saw fit to give me a six-year term until my 70th birthday in 2005. This was not without precedent. President Vicente G. Sinco served until he was 68, and President Carlos P. Romulo served until he was 69.

We at UP continue to be mystified by how one man's petty tyranny can hold an entire chamber and the future of our national university hostage. As a professor of political science, I am familiar with parliamentary practices in various countries. I know that any member of a legislative body has the right to ask questions; but in other countries no one is allowed to abuse this right in order to paralyze vital legislation.

UP has received resounding support for its position on SB 2587 from all sectors. In fact, this advertisement is being paid for by UP alumni who rushed to our defense as soon as they saw how Sen. Osmeña's machinations were thwarting passage of the bill. Let me be very clear about this: UP has no funds for paid advertisements, and even if it did, would not have spent its money for this purpose. But I could not say no to the clamor of well-meaning alumni and friends to state UP's case as publicly as possible.

On the other hand, I have also been advised that it may be fiscal suicide for a State university that depends on Congress for its funding to engage a powerful senator in forensic combat. Given the present state of our politics, that may well be true.

But I would betray UP's proud tradition of intelligent activism if I do not take on this challenge. With or without John Osmeña's intervention, I will leave office in less than a year's time, and my own personal fortunes are immaterial to this issue. It was not for myself that we waged this effort to revise the UP Charter, but for the University itself and for our country's future in a fiercely competitive, knowledge-based world order.

And so again I ask of our political leadership: let me suffer the worst of John Osmeña's peevishness and obstructionism, but please spare the University, and allow it to realize its full potential as our national university.

More facts and figures

From the University of the Philippines

John Osmeña (JO): President Nemenzo is remaining illegally in office by serving beyond age 65.

***University of the Philippines (UP)*:** **Neither the Constitution nor Congress set the term of office of the UP President. Instead, Congress lodged the power of university governance with the Board of Regents; that power covers setting terms of office for university positions, including the UP President. Article 34 of the UP Code provides for a six-year term for the President until he or she reaches 70 years. President Nemenzo is still within this limit. This is not without precedent. President Vicente G. Sinco served until he was 68, and President Carlos P. Romulo served until he was officially 69.**

JO: UP has failed in its mission of serving all Filipinos because most of its students are in Luzon or come from Luzon, to the detriment of the Visayas and Mindanao.

UP: **Gross enrollment figures don't tell the whole story. Indeed most UP students study in the University's Luzon campuses in Diliman, Manila, Los Baños, and Baguio. But this stands to reason, because Luzon is the country's most populous island, and most of UP's campuses are in Luzon. Also, most of the country's best high schools—from where a high percentage of UPCAT qualifiers might be expected to come—are in Luzon. Eighty percent (80%) of all UPCAT applicants come from Luzon. Unless and until the government pours more funding into the improvement of secondary education outside of Luzon, this situation will prevail.**

Even so, the Visayas and Mindanao figure more significantly in the UP student population than Sen. Osmeña would have us believe. In 2004, 32% of all UPCAT qualifiers (3,683 out of 11,381) come from the Visayas and Mindanao. A good number of such qualifiers choose to study in one of the Luzon campuses, for personal and academic reasons.

JO: UP has become a rich man's school, as demonstrated by its parking problem.

UP: **Every day, the UP Diliman campus is home and host to some 80,000 people, including students, faculty, staff, area residents, and visitors. The main parking lot in front of Palma Hall can barely accommodate 100 cars. It would be more surprising if we did not have a parking problem.**

A more accurate indicator of UP's economic profile is the fact that based on self-reported income, less than 4% of all UP students come from families with an annual income of P1 million or more.

JO: President Nemenzo wants changes in the composition of the Board of Regents and the selection process for its members so he can control the choice of his successor, who will be elected by the BOR.

UP: **At present, the members of the BOR are either *ex officio* (the chair of the Commission on Higher Education, the UP President, the chairs of the education committees of the House and the Senate, and the elected representatives of the faculty, alumni, and students) or appointed by the President of the Philippines. The UP President does not have a hand in any of these appointments, and the Regents hold fixed terms of office which in most cases will exceed his own.**

UP is seeking the inclusion of an elected Staff Regent to represent the University's thousands of non-teaching staff, and to subject the selection of Malacañang appointees to a more consultative and rigorous process. These revisions were sought by the UP community, and not just by President Nemenzo, who cannot personally benefit from them.

JO: UP is a haven of disruptive and destructive anti-Establishment activities.

UP: **UP is proud of its tradition of critical inquiry and political dissent, if not for which we might still be languishing under martial rule. And it is this same spirit of critical inquiry—not only in politics and economics but also in the arts and sciences—that has led UP to excel in all fields of learning. Despite its resource limitations, UP continues to lead the nation in professional licensure exams, in international publications, and in most other measures of performance and academic excellence.**

JO: President Nemenzo favors State ownership and State control over private initiative.

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Bombers kill 10 in Israel port

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The Israelis called off further contacts that had been planned for Monday ahead of a possible summit this week.

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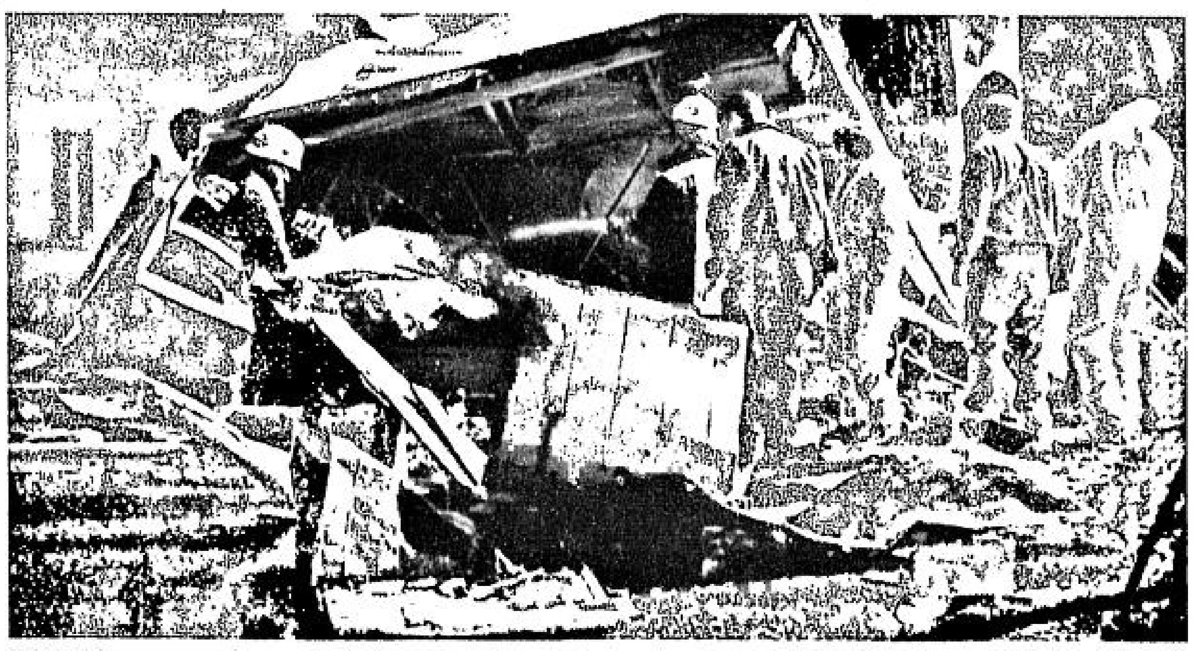
Sunday's bombings were the first by Palestinians from fenced-in Gaza since violence erupted in September 2000.



ISRAELI rescue workers search the scene after explosions in the port of the Israeli town of Ashdod March 14. The blasts prompted Israel to cancel talks on arranging an Israeli-Palestinian peace summit. REUTERS

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Palestinian militants had vowed revenge after Israeli troops killed 14 people in a Gaza raid on March 7. "The killing of Jews has become a form of worship that gets us close to God," al-Aqsa bomber Nabil Mas'oud said in a pre-recorded videotape.

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Jailed Palestinian woman bomber longs for vengeance

By Megan Goldin

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Like her fellow inmates, Khalil said she was motivated by revenge—for Israel's killing of her fiancé in a West Bank army raid four days before her wedding and the deaths of her brother and cousin, both of whom carried out suicide bombings.

Khalil is one of about 25 Palestinian women convicted by Israel for planning suicide attacks. Some of the women were captured with explosives strapped to their bodies.

Seven Palestinian women have carried out suicide bombings since 2002. There have been more than 100 such attacks in Israel since a Palestinian uprising began in 2000.

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Israeli troops apprehended her after she was fitted for her bomb belt but before she could launch her attack.

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

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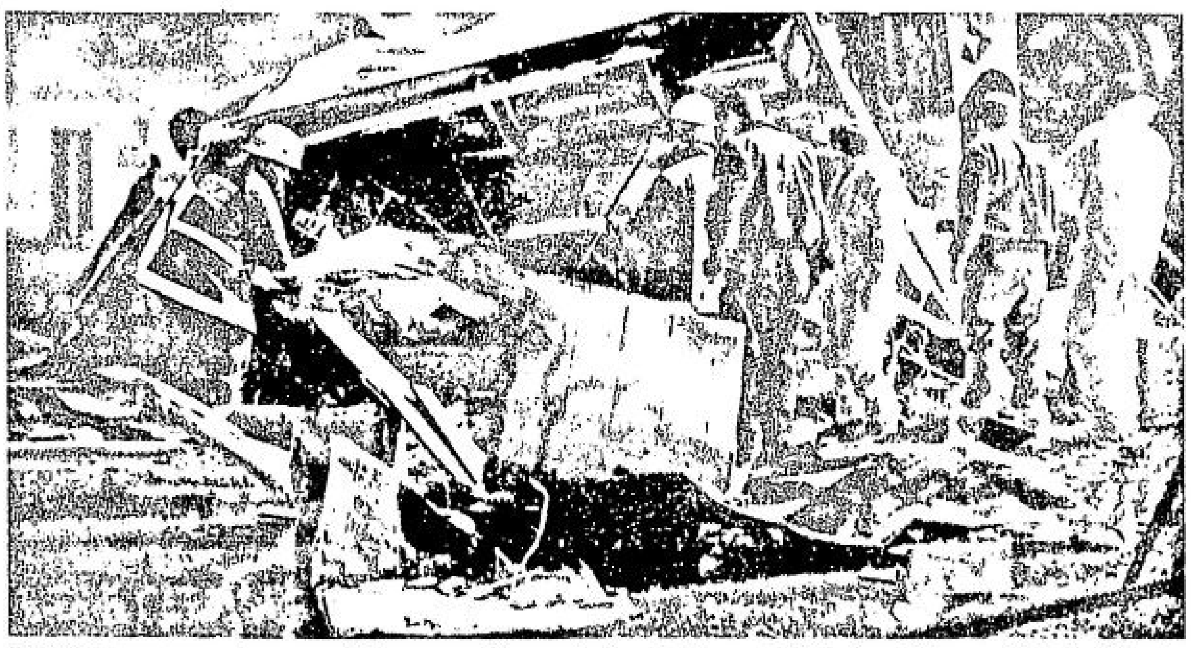

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Putin gets second term amid crushing reelection victory

SMOKE and flames of the burning Manezh exhibition center are seen behind Moscow's Kremlin, March 14. A major fire on Sunday gutted a historic building just outside the Kremlin that was used by aristocrats during tsarist days as a horse-riding center. REUTERS

MOSCOW—President Vladimir Putin basked Monday in a crushing reelection victory amid warnings that the former KGB spy will rule Russia with tsar-like power during a second term.

"Modernization instead of democratization," wrote the Izvestia newspaper. "The president has built a system in which all and everything depends on him."

Russian voters handed Putin a sweeping reelection victory after a vote on Sunday that lacked drama but confirmed a desire for post-Soviet stability that Putin embodies here.

With nearly all the votes counted, Putin by far led the field of six candidates, getting 71.2 percent of ballots cast. His nearest challenger, Communist Party candidate Nikolai Kharitonov lagged behind with 13.7 percent.

"Today our fate depends on the tastes and limits of our president," the respected Vedomosti daily said in an editorial.

"Judging by the amount of levers and instruments that Vladimir Putin has concentrated in his hands, he is beginning to resemble his colleagues in the former Soviet republics."

"The experience of post-Soviet presidents has shown that they and their inner circle directly influence everything that happens in the country," Vedomosti said.

"Many thought that Russia was above such a primitive vertical power structure. But it turns out that, with effort, it can be built here as well," it added.

In his first public statements following the election, Putin, at times humble, confident and stern, vowed to defend democratic principles and lead a foreign policy based on compromise rather than "imperialist ambitions." "I promise that the democratic accomplishments of our people will be unconditionally defended and guaranteed," Putin said in televised remarks early Monday from his campaign headquarters near the Kremlin.

"We will not stop with our accomplishments and will strengthen a multiparty system. We will strengthen civic society and do everything to ensure freedom of the mass media," Putin said.

The remarks seemed to address criticism both domestically and abroad that during the election campaign, the incumbent enjoyed a disproportionate advantage in the state-controlled media that nationalist challenger Sergei Glazyev charged "exceeded all limits." And in a jarring reminder of mounting Western concerns about the state of democracy in Russia, top US officials said Sunday that they were concerned about the presidential campaign.

"I don't see it going back to the days of the Soviet Union. But we are concerned about a level of authoritarianism creeping back in the society," US Secretary of State Colin Powell said later on ABC television.

Putin is set to begin a second term with power reminiscent of the omnipotence of Soviet leaders—a pro-Kremlin party controls two-thirds of parliament, state-controlled media offer slavish coverage and former secret service colleagues are in top posts. *AFP*

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Judge blocks Al Fayed bid for Diana probe

EDINBURGH—A British judge Friday blocked a bid to hold a full public inquiry into the death of Princess Diana and her lover in 1997, rejecting "speculative" claims that the pair was murdered by the British security services.

Egyptian-born businessman Mohamed Al Fayed, father of Diana's lover, Dodi, was pursuing a judicial review of a refusal to hold an inquiry in Scotland, where he has a Highland home.

Fayed, the owner of Harrods department store in London and the Paris Ritz hotel in Paris, maintains that British security service agents posing as paparazzi killed the couple.

Diana and Dodi died in an August 1997 car crash in a Parisian underpass, a year after Diana's divorce from Prince Charles, the eldest son of Queen Elizabeth II and the heir to the British throne.

An official French report concluded that the crash was caused by excessive speed and the high levels of alcohol and prescription drugs found in the blood of French driver Henri Paul, who also died.

But Fayed claimed that the security services were acting as part of a plot by those who disapproved of his son's relationship with the princess.

The businessman claimed that under the European Convention of Human Rights, he was entitled to a public inquiry because the French probe failed to investigate the crash adequately.

But Lord Drummond-Young ruled Friday at the Court of Session in the Scottish capital Edinburgh that Scotland's semi-autonomous government had previously acted lawfully in refusing the tycoon's request for a public probe.

The judge said that as Diana and Dodi died in France, there was no authority in Scotland to investigate their deaths.

"Allegations that are more properly characterized as supposition or speculation or conjecture are irrelevant" in determining whether there was proof that British security services may have been involved in the deaths, the judge said. *AFP*

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MASTER OF DIEN BIEN PHU Vietnam General Vo Nguyen Giap, 92, looks on at a veterans meeting in Hanoi March 13. Giap is the mastermind of the historic defeat of the French in 1954 in Dien Bien Phu. Vietnam is gearing up for the 50th anniversary of the victory which led to the signing of the 1954 Geneva agreement. REUTERS

Seoul cancels talks with Pyongyang due to uncertainty after impeachment

SEOUL—South Korea cancelled bilateral economic talks planned for Monday after Pyongyang asked for a venue switch to the North because of the political uncertainty caused by the impeachment of President Roh Moo-hyun.

In a sign the government wants to keep Asia's fourth-largest economy on track amid crisis, a Finance Ministry official said the government would seek a supplementary budget if necessary.

Friday's parliamentary vote stunned many, sparked nightly protests by thousands of candle-waving South Koreans and thrust the country into uncertainty. The Constitutional Court has six months to decide whether to uphold the vote, and Prime Minister Goh Kun is acting president during that time.

Police said they expect nightly protests in Seoul this week.

The Unification Ministry said the North and South would discuss when and how to reschedule the talks, which had been due to discuss economic cooperation and transport links being built through the Demilitarized Zone border. The North wanted the talks moved from Paju in the South to Kaesong in the North.

"As the venue of talks has been suddenly relocated by North Korea, practically it was impossible to hold talks today," said a Unification Ministry spokesperson.

It was the first tangible fallout for North-South ties from Friday's impeachment vote amid rowdy scenes in parliament.

Goh took out advertisements in all the country's main newspapers on Monday to reassure people his government would do its best to run the country and stabilize financial markets.

South Korean shares rebounded on Monday after falling sharply on Friday because of the impeachment vote. Bond prices edged down on profit taking and the won was also lower.

On Sunday, tens of thousands of South Koreans protested for the third successive night.

"I came here to impeach those spoiled politicians, who have made huge mistakes and still do not realize their wrongdoings," said Cha Jee-hoon, a 25-year-old university student in Seoul.

Police said further daily demonstrations in Seoul were planned and organizers expect about 10,000 each night.

North Korea pointed the finger of blame for the first time on Sunday.

"It was none other than the United States that sparked such a disturbing development," the official KCNA news agency quoted a North Korean spokesperson as saying. "The US hatched such a plot for impeachment in South Korea since October."

The spokesperson, from the body that oversees relations with the South, did not elaborate on the plot. He said the South Korean opposition had driven the vote through parliament in what amounted to a coup and had insulted the South Korean people. *Reuters*

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Population bomb

EDITORIAL

THIS is one instance where the presidential candidates will have to make "motherhood" statements. Or, to be more exact, "parenthood" statements. We refer to the population bomb that is ticking away, negating whatever little progress the country has attained in economic development. Unless defused soon, the population bomb could explode in the near future and shatter a nation that is living on borrowed time.

The population will increase by 1.6 million to 2 million this year, raising it to 84 million, according to the Commission on Population. The commission has predicted that by 2034, the population could explode to 170 million. If the present situation where 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty line continues, that would mean that in the next 30 years, about 68 million Filipinos would be living in abject and inhuman conditions.

The population bomb has alarmed many people who are concerned over the future of the country, but it does not seem to bother most government officials and politicians. Or if it does, they do not seem to want to do anything drastic for fear of incurring the ire of the influential Catholic Church.

The Muslim religious leaders of the Philippines have taken a more liberal stand on the population issue. Last week they issued a *fatwah* (edict) that would allow Muslim couples to practice family planning without fear of censure. They agreed on the need for family planning "for the welfare of the mother, the child and for the couple to raise good children who are pious, healthy, educated, useful and well-behaved citizens."

Why the reluctance of government officials, politicians and candidates to take a strong stand on family planning? They are apparently afraid of the Catholic Church and the so-called Catholic vote. But the Catholic vote has been proven to be a myth. A refutation was provided by the election to the Senate of Dr. Juan Flavier, an advocate of artificial means of family planning.

The Church prevented Flavier from attaining the No. 1 position in the list of 12 winning candidates, but it did not prevent his election. Flavier himself realizes that the Church is a powerful force in Philippine politics. But that was in the past. Recent surveys indicate that politicians and candidates have no more reason to fear a Catholic backlash if they take a more enlightened stand on family planning.

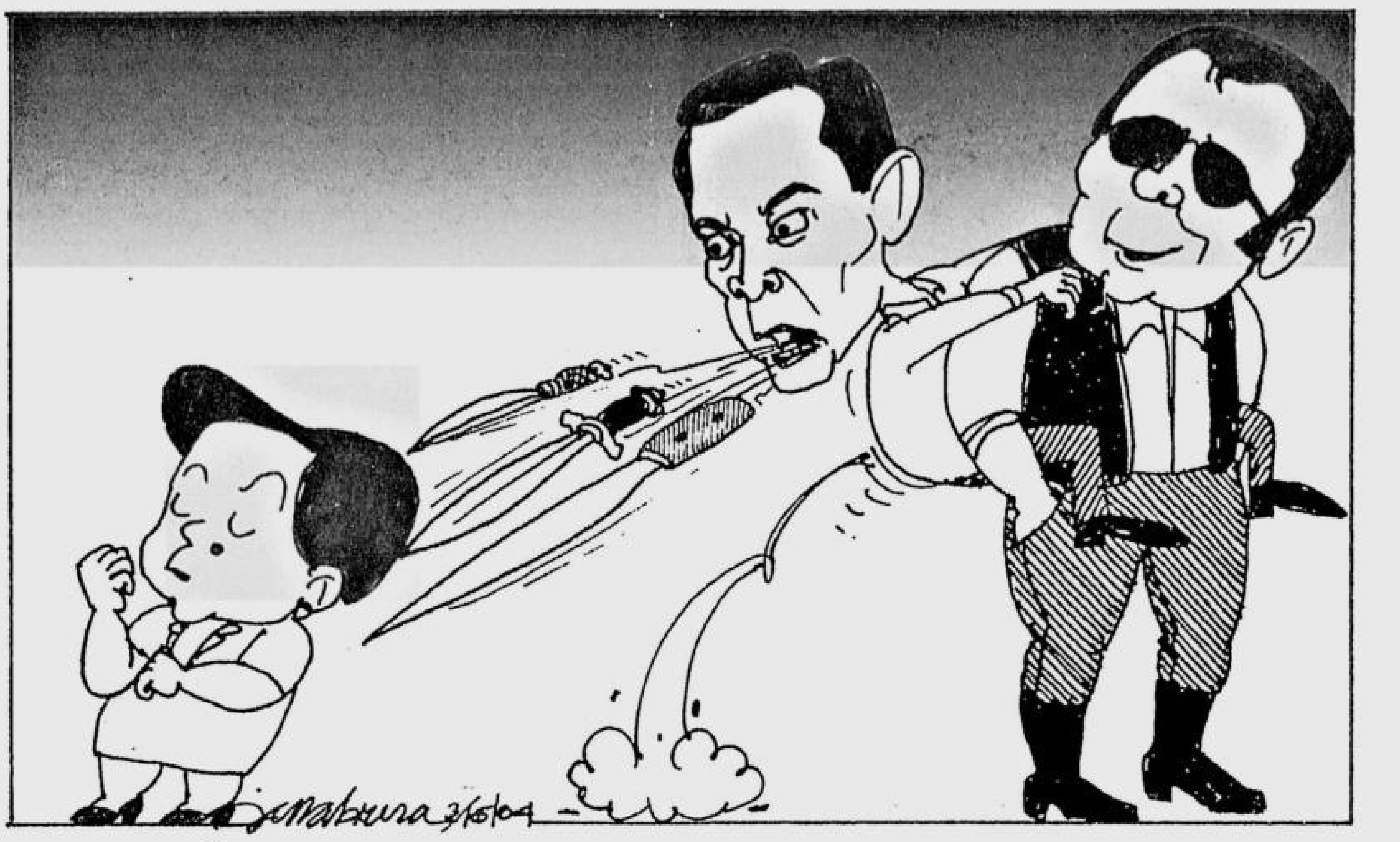
The recent *Ulat ng Bayan* Survey on Family Planning conducted by Pulse Asia shows that 82 percent, or roughly 8 out of 10 voters, would support candidates who favor giving couples a free choice of family planning methods. This is an increase of 13 percent from the 69 percent recorded in a similar survey in 2000.

Exactly 82 percent of the voters also said they would support candidates who favor a law on family planning, an increase of 11 percent from the 2000 figure. The recent survey also showed that about 50 percent of the voters think that a candidate's espousal of family planning issues would mean victory for the candidate, against only 8 percent who said that it would spell defeat. About 41 percent said it would have no effect on a candidate's chances of winning an election.

We cannot understand, therefore, the timidity of the majority of the presidential candidates on the population issue. If elected, it is one of the major economic and social concerns that the candidate would have to immediately address if he or she is to promote economic growth. The population issue, as executive director Tomas Osias of the Commission on Population has said, has a big impact on economic development, food security, health, education, environment and housing.

Only Sen. Panfilo Lacson and Bro. Eddie Villanueva have taken definite stands on the population issue. Lacson said that if elected he would institute a family planning program based on a policy of two children per family. A candidate cannot be more definite than that. Villanueva is in favor of modern methods of family planning but is against all forms of abortion.

What about the other presidential candidates? What are the specifics of their stand on issues of family planning and reproductive health? The country's population growth is approaching a breaking point, which could occur during the term of the next president. If the candidates will not volunteer their views, then, perhaps, it's time business, civil society groups or voters' groups made them to speak up on the issue.



Rosary of what ifs

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"TRAGEDY is the difference between what is and what could have been." Is that why our national life seems a never ending cycle of "what ifs?"

What if Ferdinand Marcos' regime didn't deteriorate into a kleptocracy? Suppose he ignored Imelda. Imagine he used martial law powers with a Lee Kwan Yew's austere integrity.

This country would be an economic tiger today. A grateful people would have honored him, including that elusive laurel : Libingan ng mga Bayani burial.

Since Marcos, average yearly GDP growth rate stagnated at a piddling 3.1 percent. That's less than half the rates achieved by China or Thailand. So, we're a candidate for basket case status.

And what if Benigno Aquino chickened out? Assume he opted for a cushy "New Society" job. Ninoy would have been diminished.

An enraged Cory Aquino would not have emerged from a housewife's concerns. Nor would People Power have erupted, spreading to Czechoslovakia, Indonesia and Tiannamen Square.

What if Joseph Estrada hewed to pledges, stitched in cadenced prose, into his "Now Power Is With The People" inaugural speech?

People Power II would not have ousted him for "5-K governance of *kamag-anak, kaibigan, kumpadre, kaklase—at kabit*. And Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo would have remained an indifferent social welfare secretary.

"Three things never return: the released arrow, the spoken word and missed opportunity." And our sorry track record speaks for openings glossed over.

"At its present rate of population growth (2.36 percent), and the economy (3 percent), it will take 30 years to catch up to where Thailand is today," notes consultant Peter Wallace "Yet, 25 years ago, the country was ahead of Thailand. It was second to Japan 40 years ago."

"The Philippines missed the Industrial Revolution," he adds. "But there is now a chance. It is in domination in the Information Age." Can we grab chances there, given a dilapidated education system that cranks out half-literates?

Potential breakthroughs appear in the recovery of Asian economies from the late 1990s financial crisis, former Asian Development Bank economist Ernesto Pernia points out. Regional economic growth may surge from last year's 3.2 percent to 4.1 percent in 2004.

"In the nascent rebound of both the world and Asian economies, the Philippines again has the opportunity to rise to its potential," Pernia said. "Is the country, this time, up to the challenge."

For the hint of an answer, consider additional "what ifs."

What if Juan Ponce Enrile, Gringo Honasan, et al. abandoned power grab schemes and coup plots? After all, an aroused people at Edsa saved their hides from being nailed to Camp Crame's walls by Fabian Ver's storm troopers.

They never did. All they gave in return were seven aborted coups, "God Save The Queen" plots—and their aftermath in Oakwood and Kawal-style mutinies, plus *dagdag bawas*.

In dealing with the notorious martial law coconut levy, what if Eduardo Cojuangco abided by the "Zacchaeus Principle"? Would a fund-starved industry avoided being toppled by Indonesia from being Numero Ono world exporter?

In Luke's account, the tax collector pledged fourfold amends for all he had wronged. No such restitution happened here.

For over 17 years, *abogados de campanilla* blocked the coco levy's return—until the Davide Supreme Court firmly ruled: the levy were taxes.

Instead of Zacchaeus-like compliance, Cojuangco's congressional "Brat Pack" triggered a near-constitutional crisis to impeach Chief Justice Hilario Davide. In fact, gamblers today bet the "Brat Pack" will jump the administration's ship just before elections for a "more pliable candidate."

So, are we among what a UN Human Development Report says are " democracies in transition to nowhere"?

The Philippines was among 81 countries that, in the mid 1980s and early 1990s, shattered dictatorships, notes Deepening Democracy In A Fragmented World report.

Since them, some bogged down in limited freedoms and dysfunctional policies. The "result is increasingly alienated and angry populations."

The missing link is "democratic governance in the broadest sense," UNDP's Mark Malloch Brown writes. This consists of "core values that allow the poor to gain power through participation."

Promoting democratic politics requires expanding capabilities, such as education, the report says.

In addition, "establishing democratic control over security (military) forces is another priority."

When order breaks down, poor people usually are the first victims. And all too often, violence against civilians emanates from irregular forces but under government sway.

"Without democratic civil control over security forces—including an effective-even handed national police force—governments cannot guarantee security and safety and human development is held back."

What if President Macapagal-Arroyo kept her Rizal Day solemn pledge not to run for reelection? Would she have been able to provide the "missing link of democratic governance"?

Instead, she's bogged down in coddling Erap in detention, Supreme Court appointments that vanish and tarnished election commission nominees.

And what if Fernando Poe, like Saul on the road to Damascus, came to his senses? Would he realize he's unqualified to be president? Would he see that those egging him on are self-serving political buccaneers?

And what if "Da King" would... Oh, never mind. Forget it.

* * *

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Head or heart?

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

HEAD or heart was the topic of several talk shows and forums after Fernando Poe Jr. suggested the superiority of heart over head as supreme presidential virtue last week. He took the offensive amid his rivals' criticism of him as lacking the head to head government. "Without this," he pointed to his heart to the wild applause of his audience, "all the rest don't matter." If elected, he said, demonstrating one of the presumed qualities of heart, which was humility, he would become a "servant of the people."

I had a feeling of *déjà vu* reading about it and watching the forums that debated the relative merits of head and heart. I recall that close to 20 years ago, that issue also caught the imagination of the nation. That was during the "snap elections" of 1986. Marcos also made a big deal about his presumed intellectual superiority over Cory Aquino and tried to make the phrase "*walang alam*" stick to her. Not entirely unsuccessfully, the phrase would hound her afterward when she became president.

Unfortunately for Marcos, he was already widely detested by then. The issue had become more than their relative abilities, it had become one of tyranny versus freedom. Even more unfortunately for Marcos, he had proven that soulless intelligence was dangerous in the extreme. It made for shrewdness, craftiness, unscrupulousness. For most people, the equation had become: Better "*walang alam*" than "*puro gulang*," better guileless than ruthless.

I've heard that logic expressed again by people in forums I've spoken in over these past several months. It goes: We've just had someone with a PhD in economics drive us to the wall economically, politically, and even militarily. We've had someone who is bright plunge the peso to an all-time low, wreak enmity and strife upon the nation, and spark a military mutiny after 14 years. Maybe it's time we put in power a "*walang alam*" but with a "*ginintuang puso*." Maybe it's time we had "*puso*" rather than "*tuso*." Better someone who isn't so bright but has a heart of gold. Better someone who has no experience than someone who has much experience lying, cheating and stealing.

I confess the proposition isn't completely unattractive. It's not only because the contrast between the high of Edsa II and the low of the plight of the country late last year is enough to strike dismay in the stoutest of hearts. It is so too as a general principle. The nature of our political culture, with its lack of a real party system, its obsession with personality and patronage, its tolerance for skirting the law is an enticement to corruption and oppression. If that is the case, then truly, as I've said before not entirely in jest, John Locke's dictum applies most to us, if in a perverse sense: A government that governs least governs best.

That is to say, the less government intrudes in our lives, the better for us. The rabbi of Anatevka in "Fiddler on the Roof" puts it best when he says there is a proper blessing for the Tsar and that is, "May God bless and keep the Tsar—far away from us." "Far away from us" can always be figurative rather than literal, mental rather than geographical. Dumbness and ignorance just as effectively make for absence or distance. Our government being naturally prone to oppression and exploitation better that it is populated, or headed, by the dumb and ignorant. It's a cynical view, but our experience with government offers ample incentive for cynicism.

Going past the cynicism, however, one may seriously wonder if the debate between head and heart is not largely a spurious one. I myself find it so, because the terms are not really defined to begin with. What do people really mean by "head" and "heart?" That is not always, if at all, clear.

For most people "head" is either just cleverness or the possession of letters after one's name. Marcos' vaunted superior IQ, largely the product of relentless propaganda, itself begins with the story that he defended himself brilliantly before the Supreme Court on the charge of landing a sniper's bullet in Julio Nalundasan's—his father's political rival's—skull one dark night, preparing for it by poring through law books in flickering light in prison. It wasn't true, of course; his exoneration was a political decision. But the myth persisted and his fame increased, the reputation for brilliance resting on an ability to screw the law. He would live up to the reputation.

To this day, Ernesto Maceda and Juan Ponce Enrile continue to claim adherents because of it. This country's public disapprobation of shrewdness and unscrupulousness is more than offset by its private admiration of it.

The other view of brightness is expertise in something. Miriam Defensor-Santiago has always advertised herself in that light, with no small amount of success, depicting herself as the authority in constitutional law. Never mind that something seems to be wrong with her head, or maybe it is understandable because her neck is supporting a heavy head. GMA has also advertised herself along those lines, at least when the occasion calls for it, as in comparing herself to FPJ. (Elsewhere she has tried to emit a show-biz persona.) She depicts herself a doctor in economics and an expert in trade, and, despite the peso falling to an all-time low and joblessness rising to an all-time high, she has had no small amount of success there either.

The one thing these concepts of brightness or high IQ or a "good head" have in common is this: They do not include a concept of morality in the package. In fact intelligence and morality are inextricably linked. I myself rarely use the phrase "moral intelligence" for only one reason. It is a redundancy, it is a superfluity, it is a repetition.

True intelligence is always moral. (*To be concluded.*)

Fiscal management is SB's secret

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AT THE DZRH program I co-host with Cecile Alvarez every Sunday evening (while she's receiving treatment for cancer in New York City, Nelly Natividad Valdez, wife of former UE Law Dean and Government Corporate Counsel Amado Valdez, will be assisting me), we recently had as guest Quezon City Mayor Feliciano "SB" Belmonte, who's running in what's appears to be a no-contest election. A recent survey indicates that SB's pulling away at 73 percent vs. rival and predecessor Ismael Mathay, who scored 19 percent. SB is a tough candidate to fight, for recently he was given the Local Government Leadership Award as "the most outstanding city mayor of the Philippines" from 10 finalists by a joint committee chaired by opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel, who authored the Local Government Code; the UP National Center for Public Administration and Governance and the DILG. In addition, he bagged the "Gawad Galing Pook 2003" award for "effective fiscal management in recognition of Quezon City's having topped the income of all cities through efficient collection.

* * *

What obviously worked for.Belmonte is his tight fiscal management, side by side with urban renewal to improve President Quezon's dream city. *"Kuripot ako sa pera,"* he said with a smile, but it's also clear that his management skills honed at PAL and GSIS have become great assets in his new career. It also shows what a local executive can do if properly motivated. When Belmonte assumed office in July 2001, Quezon City was bankrupt, owing the Land Bank P1.250 billion in debt, part of what used to be the old PNB debt; there was a P1.5-billion debt owed to suppliers and garbage collectors alone from January to June 2001, apart from the P55 million in *basura* IOUs ordered paid by the Supreme Court. Among the immediate measures SB took to shrink the city's debt burden was to reduce the number of garbage hauling contractors from 16 to eight, especially since he found that the 330 trucks were frequently making only half-full trips or worse, ghost trips. Today, with only 200 trucks hauling, Quezon City has a more efficient garbage collection and still saves P25 million every month.

* * *

The other side of spending is raising revenues. Quezon City had one of the lowest business taxes in the country, but also one of the fastest growing populations—100 percent increase in a few years. Of Quezon City's 1.2 million population, Metro Manila's biggest, 51 percent belong to the urban poor. Belmonte raised taxes for business and computerized payments of real property tax among the 440,000 real property units in the city. Raising taxes met with resistance at first, but eventually the businessmen saw where their taxes were going, such as the expanded health services and the renewal of Tomas Morato Avenue into a model commercial area that brought in bigger business for the establishments there. They also like the new "airport lounge" he built in City Hall where the taxpayers can sit around in comfort and sip free coffee while awaiting their turn to pay their realty taxes. SB also returned to the 142 barangays the management of their share in real property tax that used to be held by his predecessors, which amounted to P500 million for 2003 alone.

* * *

We asked SB, who's running under the K-4 banner, for a picture of Quezon City in the national elections. He said that GMA is doing okay in districts 1 and 3, but that she trails FPJ in District II, which is also Quezon City's biggest. This puts Quezon City as a tight battleground between GMA and FPJ, which tallies with Sen. John Osmeña's assessment about Metro Manila being tight between them. In fact, to win, GMA has to concentrate in the so-called Pangasinan-Quezon corridor that includes the National Capital Region, which holds 40 percent of the country's total votes.

* * *

Earlier I had written that prominent Catholic lay leader Domingo Mapa was a strong contender for the post of Ambassador to the Vatican, having been endorsed by ranking Church leaders such as Ricardo Cardinal Vidal. But reports indicate that another Catholic lay leader, my co-alumna at the old Holy Ghost College, Leonida Laki-Vera, has already been appointed to that post by the President and confirmed by the Commission on Appointments. Among the endorsements she received were those of Jaime Cardinal Sin, with whom Vera worked closely in several major conferences, such as the 4th World Meeting of Families in January 2003, and of Pampanga Archbishop Paciano Aniceto.

* * *

I was one of the earliest to come out against the "Kinse Años" ad of Napoleon Brandy, and I'm glad that many individuals, including politicians, as well as organizations and groups have since joined the clamor for its immediate pullout because of its offense to public morals and assault on basic decency. The latest is Sen. Francis Pangilinan, who stressed that just when we have passed the law against the abuse and exploitation of children, the ad "undermines the moral foundation of our people and corrodes the moral fabric we are trying very hard to protect." Pangilinan stressed that the ad clearly violated this new law. He called on the ad agency, the Sinson Lascano Group, to be "extra vigilant" and ensure that its ads are not offensive to good taste and public morals, and be aware of their social responsibility.

* * *

The public, however, would like to see the two senators who modeled in previous ads of the brandy, Noli de Castro and Panfilo Lacson, add their voices to this issue—where do they stand in this "Kinse Años" controversy? As for the public, if Destileria Limtuaco plays it tough and refuses to heed the Ad Board's plea to pull out that ad, then a genuine boycott of its products is in order; and yes, companies shouldn't forget to boycott the Sinson Lascano Group too.

'Debating' population

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

AS PART of the effort to elevate population and reproductive health concerns as a major issue among both candidates and voters in the current national and local elections, Pulse Asia, the Philippine Political Science Association, the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development, in cooperation with ABS-CBN are sponsoring a "Presidential Debate on Population, Poverty and Human Development" next Monday, March 22.

To be aired live from 7 to 9 p.m. over ANC, the "debate" will be moderated by Tina Monzon-Palma and will feature three panelists putting questions to the candidates. I put "debate" in quotes because the candidates will not really be debating among themselves but rather replying to the questions put before them and presenting their positions on the issues. Each candidate is free though to respond to some points raised by the others.

The three panelists are: Donald Dee, president of the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines or ECOP, Prof. Ernesto Pernia of the UP School of Economics, and myself. A fourth panelist would have been Archbishop Paciano Aniceto, chair of the CBCP Commission on Family Life, but he later begged off for reasons that are still unclear.

As with the other "debates" being planned among the men and the woman running for president, the big question is who among the contenders will show up and allow himself or herself to be "grilled" by a panel. So far, the candidates who have committed to show up at this televised debate are Bro. Eddie Villanueva, Sen. Ping Lacson and Raul Roco. As expected, the perceived "frontrunners," Fernando Poe Jr. and President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, have yet to firmly commit their presence. Proxies will not be allowed. As agreed among the TV producers and the sponsors, if a candidate does not show up, he or she will be represented by an empty chair bearing his or her nameplate.

* * *

A BACKGROUND paper on the project says the "debate" or "forum" is aimed at "mainstreaming population, family planning and reproductive health in the electoral arena, stir up public discussion and help raise public awareness on the issue."

Prof. Felipe Miranda of Pulse Asia asserts that "we need to impress upon presidential candidates that it is their moral and political duty to make known to the electorate their position on such a salient and pressing public concern as population."

As well, by framing the issues within the interlinked issues of "population, poverty and human development," the debate will, it is hoped, "provide a broader framework of analyzing the population problem," giving candidates "the chance to propound on other issues that bear on human development, such as health, education, income, etc."

While other debates between presidential candidates, such as those proposed by the Comelec and the PPCRV, for instance, are expected to focus on such "hard" issues as economic policy, graft and corruption, peace and order, the insurgency and social justice, the March 22 debate will focus on what many in politics and the media would consider "soft" issues. But while "soft," because issues like health, family planning, education, and social welfare are not considered politically sensitive, they are nonetheless important and vital to the survival and well-being of our families, communities and society. If only because it would force candidates and their advisers to give serious thought to this arena of governance and policy-making, the debate would already have fulfilled its social purpose.

* * *

THE DEPARTMENT of Health and Pfizer Philippines recently launched the search for "Heroes for Health," five individuals who have exhibited "heroism" in their pursuit of providing health services to their fellow Filipinos. The search is on for Filipinos who, in "devoting much of their time, effort and personal resources to their projects, giving up better income and physical comforts, and willing to risk even their very lives if need be for the fulfillment of their mission," became heroes to their patients and to their communities and to the larger society.

The projects that nominees are involved in must have been ongoing for at least three years and should have helped improve the health and quality of life of a great number of people. Possible areas of involvement are: public and community health care, disease control and management, philanthropic and voluntary work, people empowerment, capacity-building, or advocacy and education.

* * *

EACH of the five awardees will receive P500,000 from Pfizer, with half of the prize money going to the awardee personally and the other half going to the group or organization that the awardee is connected with.

Aside from the cash prize, each awardee will receive a medallion, round-trip transportation from his or her home base to Manila for the awarding ceremonies, and accommodations.

Individuals or organizations can obtain nomination forms from the Pfizer Corporate Affairs Office, the Pfizer field force, DOH Centers for Health Development and Perceptions Inc. These can also be downloaded from www.pfizer.com. ph and www.doh.gov.ph.

Deadline for submission of nominations is April 30 and can be submitted to Perceptions Inc., third floor, Fortune Office Bldg., 160 Legaspi St., Legazpi Village, Makati. They can also be e-mailed to heroesforhealth@pfizer.com.

It shouldn't be too hard to look for possible nominees as these days, any medical personnel who chooses to stay put and give up the prospect of higher wages abroad is already a hero worth emulating.

Legaspi's blockbuster

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

THERE'S a "WOW Philippines" exhibit ongoing (till April 11) at the National Museum's 4th floor organized by State Corporation for Spanish Cultural Action Abroad (Seacex) in cooperation with the NM and the Instituto Cervantes to commemorate the 500th centenary of Miguel Lopez de Legaspi's birth. Entitled "Filipinas: Gateway to the Orient" it is guaranteed to take your breath away. Two hundred objects, many brought over to the New World through the Galleon Trade, have found their way back and furnish a glimpse of what Manila interiors may have contained centuries ago. But it is the soul of the Filipino that shines through in religious carvings and embroideries that showcase his artistry and craftsmanship. For that alone the show is worth seeing.

The exhibit is divided into three: the first, "Courses, Navigators and Scientific Expeditions," deals with those who sailed the Pacific over those three centuries and left a record of their travels. The second section, "Govern, Administer, Evangelize," examines the foundation of Philippine towns and cities as well as the religious orders and architectural and artistic endeavors. The third section is entitled "An Archipelago of Exchanges" highlights the Philippines as the gateway or the nexus between the East and West. Although this was dominated by the galleon trade the cultural footprints left by other nations resonate to this day in our lives.

No doubt all who have seen the show will have their own favorite items. One of mine is the 350-year-old, 4.5 ft. long *baul* decorated with metal sheets and forged iron on loan from the Museum of Art of Puebla, Mexico. It contains an oil painting of Manila on the inside of the cover considered the oldest representation of the city and was possibly meant as a gift to the bishop of Puebla de los Angeles, Manuel Osorio de Escobar y Llamas. In the 1850's the chest passed into the hands of a philanthropist, Jose Luis Bello, as a consequence of a Federal law where the certain religious assets were nationalized. It now forms part of the collection of the Museo del Arte Jose Luis Bello.

The anonymous Filipino painter captured for future generations a bird's eye view of civil and ecclesiastical buildings as they were before 1660. You can see the Royal chapel of the Incarnation established in 1636 by Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera as well as the wall initiated in 1592 by Gov. Perez de Dasmariñas and finished toward the 1600's by Gov. Francisco Tello. On the right hand bottom side can be glimpsed walking through the streets of the city figures on horseback and on foot, religious in different habits and the Chinese in their Parian.

There is a spectacular St. Michael and demon in ivory measuring 91 x 38 cms (3 ft x 15 inches) from the Museo Diocesano Regina Coeli in Santillana del Mar dating from the middle of the 17th century. In his right hand the image carries a metal sword and on his left the scales of justice. The ivory demon has Chinese features with a body that ends in a fish or dragon's tail. The piece is probably the biggest of the ivory pieces in either Spain or the Americas. It was donated by a member of the Tagle-Bustamante family, various members of who lived in different parts of Mexico.

Other major pieces of ivory include one of San Felipe de Jesus who was born in Mexico, entered the order of descalced Recollects in Puebla. After a time, he left the order though and went on to the Philippines to engage in commerce but again his vocation called and he entered the convent of Santa Maria de los Angeles in Manila. Returning to Mexico for his ordination his ship also called Felipe met with a storm and was blown to the Japanese coast. Captured by the Japanese he was crucified together with five other friars, part of their left ears sliced to signify their ignorance, a punishment shown in the image.

Two examples of *salacots* are also impressive. These were made of various materials such as pumpkins, leather, carabao hide or turtle and also of different vegetable fibers like nipa, buri, nito or buntal. Ordinary ones were worn daily to protect one from the fierce tropical sun but those adorned with silver were worn by the *principalia* as symbols of local office like *alcalde* or *gobernadorcillo*.

The first artifact is decorated in silver floral and bird décor sewn on the velvet covering the *nito* hat. Atop is a small silver gold plated disc in elliptical form with floral décor and the initials of its long gone owner JM. The second *salacot* is both more fascinating and rarer in that it is made from the shell of a sea urchin. On top it has a round silver plate with floral design.

There are suits of armor from Mindanao made of carabao horn and weapons like a gorgeous lantaca engraved all over and mounted on carved piece of wood dating from the 1850's. It was taken after a battle in Jolo in 1876.

Although it was Magellan who set out to discover a westward sea route between the Atlantic and the South Sea (the name given by Balboa but changed to the Pacific Ocean by Magellan) and consequently "discovered" the Philippines thus initiating the conquest, it really was Miguel Lopez de Legaspi and Fr. Andres de Urdaneta who truly opened the knowledge and treasures of the Orient to the western world. In paying tribute to Legaspi, the exhibit honors as well the decisive role the Philippines played in the relationship between Asia and the rest of the world.

Why teaching?

YOUNG BLOOD

Marie Grace A. Gomez

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I'M a teacher. Sometimes, I ask myself why I joined this profession.

I have nothing personal against teachers. I respect them for the human beings they are. As I have done research in schools here and in the provinces, I have come to regard most of them in the likeness of market vendors.

Since then, an enduring image of a teacher in my head has been that of a woman selling longganiza and tocino or an insurance agent with a big portfolio. I dislike the way they talk and chat at every chance they get. Being a product of public schools, I have encountered teachers who simply do not know what they are teaching. I have encountered several English teachers who teach phonetics yet at the same time, have speech defects. I have encountered a math teacher in a class I observed saying, "positive one plus negative one equals two." My goodness. And they wonder why we scored second to the lowest in the Third International Math and Science Survey (TIMSS). Whenever I accompany my students to interschool competitions, I would hear a lot of them talk about their lousy spouses; where to get loans with the lowest interest rates; what credit card to get and what new sideline they could take on. I feel left out most of the time because I dislike pointless chitchat. After the contests, they wonder why they lost.

My undergrad classmates would cajole and persuade me to go to law school or to take a master's degree in international relations. They even ask me, "Why are you teaching? Why did you go to education? You are wasting your PolSci degree." Whenever I get into arguments with teachers or administrators who seem envious of my credentials, they would tell me, "Why don't you work for an office? There's more money and less politics there." When I didn't have the license to teach (I had to take education credits before I could take the Licensure Examination for Teachers), some of the veteran teachers would come and ask me, *"Ano ang natapos mo? Balita ko taga-UP ka at malapit nang matapos ng MA. May lisensya ka ba?"* I tell them that a license is not needed for private school teachers. Whenever I would not pass a student, the parents would argue, *"Wala kang karapatang ibagsak ang anak ko kasi wala kang lisensya at bata ka pang* teacher. *Isusumbong kita sa* Department of Education." Go ahead, sue me. As though age and a teaching license were qualifications one must have to fail students. Furthermore, I was even accused of being an airhead by the people who I barely know and talk with, because of my UP degrees. Here comes the funny part: although many of them accuse and gossip about me, they ask for my technical advice when it comes to writing reports and memos or even in lesson planning and test construction. Again and again my undergrad classmates would prod me to get out of the business of teaching because I was always a victim of school politics. Whenever I hear this, I would just smile and say, "Aristotle said that man is a political animal. Teachers are men; ergo, teachers are political animals." I would joke and add that, at least, they would be participating in the political arena.

Perhaps, I entered the teaching profession because I wanted to improve the standards of education of this country in a micro way. At first, I wanted to teach in a public school but when I attempted to apply, the first thing that the clerk asked was, *"Sino ang kakilala mo dito?"* As though saying I did not have the right to apply because I did not know anyone from the freaking system. They didn't even ask me about my MA or where I graduated from. During that time, I already had my license and had attended a lot of seminars but I still lacked one qualification: I had no backer. And that made a big difference whether I applied in the public or private schools. My mother would often tell me that it's not what you know but who you know.

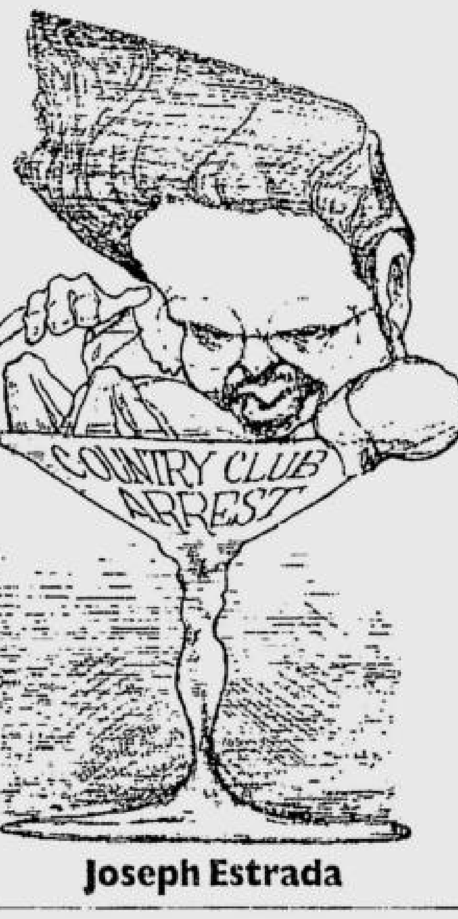
Despite all the hullabaloo I had gone through (and still am going through), I want to teach. I want to teach my students critical thinking skills through reading books and analyzing various scenarios. I want them to go to the best schools, best universities and land the best jobs so that one day, they would be able to help the country. I want to help change people's perceptions on who teachers are. I want to influence the new breed of teachers to improve themselves and not rest on the laurels of their BSEs. I want to have a culture of excellence and help get rid of the lousy mediocrities that have long plagued our educational system.

Whether the top honchos at the DepEd admit it or not, the education system has a lot of incompetent teachers be it in public or private schools because of the test results in national and international achievement tests. Take a look at most of our graduates who can barely speak in English and solve simple algebraic expressions. This has to change.

At present, I feel like talking to a wall. I also do not know how long I will keep on teaching. The salary that I have is not that good considering my qualifications. I have been ostracized by people. Some of my students dislike the way I give my difficult tests and homeworks but that's the way to get ahead in life. The only thing that keeps me going now is the knowledge that I have helped a lot of students improve their lives. I know that I am investing well in the lives of my students. And teaching them is a worthwhile investment.

Marie Grace A. Gomez, 27, is working on a Ph.D. in Education, major in Guidance at the University of the Philippines in Diliman. She also teaches Social Studies to high school students.

IN THE NEWS



Joseph Estrada

Full-page attack against UP ideals

JOHN Osmeñas full-page advertisement (PDI, 3/4/04) is a lame excuse to hit at the very core of the University of the Philippines' ideals and tradition. It shows his latent animosity, not with UP president Francisco Nemenzo, but with the ideals of activism and academic freedom that many UP students fought and died for.

Clearly, the ad was a brazen display of malice. The intent is clear: Osmeña portrays UP, represented by its president, as a community of spoiled brats and warmongers who undertake "disruptive and destructive politics." The issue no longer concerns the passage of Senate Bill 2587 (the UP Charter bill); it is a clear condemnation of the university's ideals and principles.

Osmeña should not presume that he has any moral ascendancy to lecture the UP community. What can a community of scholars and activists learn from a *trapo* who has contributed much to the political and economic degradation of the country?

In fabricating such a malicious and lame rebuttal, Osmeña does not only indict Nemenzo; he indicts the whole UP community.

This is a call to arms, a challenge to all UP students and alumni to junk John Osmeña's bid for reelection. We will not allow a *trapo* to degrade and insult the rich tradition of activism and academic ideals that our university espoused and continues to uphold.

Mabuhay ang mga iskolar ng bayan!

—JAYSON EDWARD B. SAN JUAN,
Sandigan para sa Mag-aaral at
Sambayanan, University of the
Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City

Osmeña was no 'freedom fighter'

SEN. John Osmeña has put out a one-page newspaper advertisement to respond to allegations by University of the Philippines president Francisco Nemenzo that he was responsible for the non-passage of Senate Bill 2587 calling for changes in the UP Charter.

That's his prerogative but I must say it's a very expensive way to refute a charge. However, I did not write this letter to wade into their debate, although my sympathies are with Nemenzo and the UP community in their fight to change the UP charter. I wrote this letter because in his ad, Osmeña tried to rewrite history by claiming that he "fought Marcos" to "restore democracy." That is a blatant lie.

As a leader of the overseas opposition movement against the Marcos dictatorship while in exile in the United States, let me finally put on record that Osmeña is no freedom fighter.

I don't think that he participated in any way in the exile movement to bring back democracy to the Philippines. He joined the democratic movement in the United States when everything had already become sunny and triumphant in the struggle.

I never heard him testify against the Marcos dictatorship; neither did I see him in any anti-Marcos rally or demonstration.

But everyone in the movement could attest to the fact that Osmeña was always in the company of the minions of the dictator and his wife and her entourage.

It is true that Osmeña had applied for membership in the West Coast branch of the Movement for a Free Philippines, which I led with Raul Manglapus. But he was rejected by those who knew of his activities, having made himself very visible and prominent each time Imelda Marcos was in the United States.

I remember that in the winter days of the 1970s, when we were out in the cold streets demonstrating to pressure the US government to cut military and economic aid to the dictatorship, Osmeña was always in the warm quarters of the Philippine Center in New York with Mrs. Marcos.

He came to join us in one affair in Washington, D.C. and I politely allowed him to be part of our group when we made a courtesy call on Sen. Ted Kennedy who, together with Sen. Richard Lugar, and Sen. John Kerry were among those who consistently supported our efforts.

However, this does not make him a "freedom fighter." He was a fair-weather friend at best, joining in only when the movement had won its cause.

Osmeña should straighten out the misinformation that he fought the dictatorship.

—HEHERSON T. ALVAREZ, founding chair,
Ninoy Aquino Movement and secretary
general, Movement for a Free
Philippines, Unit 1203 Gotesco Regency
Twin Tower B, Natividad Lopez St.,
Ermita, Manila

Include the poor and peasants as judges in presidential debates

THE ANAKPAWIS National Political Party seeks to make a few suggestions to the organizers of the impending debate between presidential candidates incumbent President Macapagal-Arroyo, Raul Roco, Bro. Eddie Villanueva, Panfilo Lacson and Fernando Poe Jr. We suggest that the judges of the debate should include members or leaders of grassroots people's organizations such as those representing the marginalized sectors of workers, farmers, urban poor, women and youth.

So far, none of the candidates has been brave, daring or progressive enough to touch the issues of labor, agriculture and massive unemployment and poverty. They also have consistently avoided life and death issues such as workers' wages, widespread landlessness and homelessness for a large majority of rural and urban poor, as well as the alarming state of militarization in the major provinces.

And to ensure that the debate would be understood by the greatest number of voters, it should be conducted in Filipino and not in English.

If the debate is going to be a rehearsed affair, then it loses its purpose of giving the Filipino people a genuine chance of closely scrutinizing the platforms of the candidates. The candidates would then be spouting prepared lines. The public wants to witness a no-holds-barred debate with a chance to cross-examine the candidates. They should field answers from an audience coming from various people's organizations and cause-oriented groups.

The candidates continue to woo the elite sections of society, particularly the business groups. The candidates have taken up the issues and concerns of the business sector. It's long overdue that they reveal their stands on the concerns of the poor and the working people. The workers and the peasants compose the bulk of voters in the country, but their urgent, economic and political concerns are the most neglected and avoided by candidates.

—RAFAEL V. MARIANO, national
president, Anakpawis, 138-C Scout
Fuentebella, Kamuning, Quezon City

Unfair editorial

THE PDI editorial which attacked Elmer Reyes Jacinto is unfair. His choice is indeed sad, even condemnable, but for a big media institution such as the PDI to be conducting a public flogging of a private individual is irresponsible.

There are bounds to what a media institution could comment on regarding the national exodus of bright, young individuals choosing to toil in a foreign land. And you've definitely crossed the bounds of proper editorializing.

Jacinto is a private individual, not a politician, or a government official, or a show-biz personality that any media outfit could fairly comment on, criticize or even condemn. That he topped the medical board examinations affords him some publicity, but he is not a public figure.

I do not think Mr. Jacinto made the right decision to become a nurse in the United States. His medical training is needed by many here in the Philippines. But I don't think the INQUIRER made the right editorial decision to go self-righteous and call him names.

—DOMINICK DANAO,
dominick.danao@digitel.ph

(We didn't call him names—Ed.)

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More delays in nuclear inspections in Iran

NEWS ANALYSIS

Michael Adler

Iran must make a full declaration on its nuclear program soon

WASHINGTON—Iran is punishing itself by delaying international inspections since this will prolong the UN nuclear watchdog's investigation of Tehran's atomic program, the watchdog's head Mohamed ElBaradei said Sunday.

He said the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) discovery in January of designs for sophisticated P2 centrifuges in Iran for making highly enriched uranium (HEU) that could be used to make the bomb was "a setback, a great setback" since Iran had claimed in October to have fully disclosed its nuclear activities.

This led to a tough resolution against Iran at an IAEA board of governors meeting on Saturday in Vienna.

And that drew Iran's ire and led Tehran to suspend inspections that had been scheduled for last week.

But the Iranians would "be punishing themselves if they delay things," ElBaradei told reporters on a flight from Vienna to Washington, where he is to meet on Wednesday with US President George W. Bush.

The IAEA, which verifies the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), has since February 2003 been working to determine whether Iran's nuclear program is peaceful, or geared toward secretly developing atomic weapons as the United States has charged.

It is to review the Iranian program in June and Tehran's decision to put off the inspection from last week until the end of April could mean the inspectors would not have enough time to file a full report, a diplomat said in Vienna.

ElBaradei said: "The best way obviously to answer all these suspicions is for us to go back as early as possible." He said the inspection was a "technical visit... to clarify some of issues around the P2 and going to the pilot plant (for making enriched uranium) at Natanz (in southern Iraq) to make sure it is locked, it is sealed, it is not operational." Iran had pledged in October to suspend the enrichment of uranium as a confidence-building measure with the IAEA.

ElBaradei said it was not good for the IAEA inspectors to change their schedules and "definitely inspections should not be dependent on holidays," as Iran claimed in putting off the inspection because of the Iranian New Year next week.

He said he expected Iran over the next few days to reverse its suspension and allow the inspectors in.

ElBaradei said it was a lesson for Iran that "at this stage people are hypersensitive and they (Iran) need to show that there is absolutely 100 percent full transparency." Iran must make a full declaration on its nuclear program soon, he said.

"I told the Iranians, if there's anything still to be declared under the (international) safeguards agreement under the (additional) protocol (to the NPT), they should come with it yesterday and not tomorrow," ElBaradei said.

Iran's ambassador to the IAEA Pirooz Hosseini said in Vienna last week that Tehran had not told all in October "because what we announced at that time was based on our obligations under the safeguard agreement" of the NPT.

Iran then in December signed the additional protocol allowing for wider inspections and Hosseini said that "according to the time line of the additional protocol, we are going to provide every information which is necessary for the agency." ElBaradei said if Iran wanted things to move forward at the IAEA board meeting in June "they have to come with the protocol as early as possible for us to do the proper analysis and to report on it.

"If it comes one day before the June board, then we cannot digest it," ElBaradei said.

He said the IAEA hopes to wrap up its investigation of Iran's nuclear program for suspected weapons-related activities by the end of this year.

"If there is no smoking gun, no 800-pound gorilla, if we get cooperation from the country of origin (for imported nuclear equipment), I see no reason why we should not be able to have at least most of it wrapped up by the end of the year," he said.

The major remaining issue is whether traces of highly enriched uranium that could be weapon-grade found by the IAEA at two sites in Iran were homemade or came from contamination from centrifuge parts bought on a black market abroad, as Iran claims.

"We need all the support from Iran (to resolve this) but also need support from the importing country," ElBaradei said, referring to environmental samples the IAEA wants to make in Pakistan on centrifuge parts there. *AFP*

Roco's hand signal no Satanic salute

THIS refers to the statement of Gov. Luis Villafuerte. (PDI, 2/25/04) He said that presidential aspirant Raul Roco's campaign hand sign—the thumb, index finger and pinky sticking out, is not a sign of love but a Satanic salute.

Also called the "Horned Hand," the sign, according to Villafuerte, is an indication of recognition among those who worship Satan.

Contrary to Villafuerte's studies made of it, the sign of the thumb, index finger and pinky sticking out, represent the Holy Tripod—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is for this reason Roco, and his group, would first visit a church or pay respect to a Catholic bishop or priest before he proceeds to campaign in a given locality.

Anyone who seeks Divine guidance before doing anything is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

—JAKE T. TOMAGAN,
19-A B. Mariano St.,
Sta. Ana, San Mateo, Rizal

Internal MMDA problems

TWO times a week, for three weeks, we were required to experience work that in any other circumstance we wouldn't stumble upon. The purpose was to become immersed in the world of ordinary workers. For a total of twelve hours, we became MMDA traffic enforcers assigned to assist traffic flow in the sometimes busy North Avenue in Quezon City.

Armed with reflectorized vests and gloves we did our best to facilitate traffic. It was hard work. We had to be alert about fast moving cars and we had to be courteous to the impatient pedestrians waiting for their turn to cross the street. In addition, the heat and pollution made it even more challenging. Life as an MMDA traffic enforcer was definitely action packed.

As we stayed longer, issues affecting the internal structure of the MMDA gradually emerged. Our talks with the regular MMDA traffic enforcers revealed their concerns.

We can differentiate the traffic enforcers who work for the MMDA as either the old workers or the new workers. The old employees were former Metro Aides during the Marcos administration and they were made permanent government employees by then President Marcos. They were transferred to become traffic enforcers for the MMDA. Old MMDA traffic enforcers were required to be at least high school graduates. They receive a salary of P5,800 a month plus they have benefits such as Medicare and accident insurance, and retirement plans.

The new MMDA traffic enforcers are at least college graduates hired at the start of Bayani Fernando's term. They receive salaries above the minimum wage. Yet most of these new MMDA are only temporary because they are job-order employees. Furthermore, they do not have the benefits of regular employees.

Even though, ordinary passersby may not be able to tell one from the other, a gap exists among the two generations. Old workers feel intimidated with the new workers; they feel as it they are being "phased out." A common sentiment among the new traffic enforcers is that they are not given any security regarding their tenure. This conflict is generating discontent among the employees that may sooner or later affect the functioning of the MMDA.

We were fortunate enough to meet the general manager of the MMDA, Robert C. Nacianceno and later, although briefly, MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando. We were glad that high-ranking officials of the MMDA took time to check up on students like us. We hope they would spend some time with traffic enforcers and hear them out.

—RALPH MARVIN GARCIA AND FIVE
OTHER SIGNATORIES, Ateneo de Manila
University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City

The lesson of Edsa, its teachers

I WOULD like to say this on Conrado de Quiros' column, "Fiesta." (PDI, 3/1/04)

Who was there to teach the lesson? All of us, you and I. Those who lead and who are led must go together and follow God's will. Edsa happened because God allowed it to happen.

What is the lesson to begin with? Seeing the long night and the people who kept vigil through it, risking the world and losing their loved ones in the process will make us truly learn the discipline and responsibility that come with freedom. Not good enough! The lesson is that to achieve the fruits of true freedom, we have to eradicate all forms of slavery. These include ignorance, poverty, ill-health, unjust and selfish attitudes and values. And the root of all these is sin.

Truly, Jesus Christ was there at Edsa to lead and teach that lesson to Marcos and to all of us that we may in turn teach this to the next generation. To me, this is what Edsa is all about. As Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales correctly stated, it is a call for change and repentance, in obvious reference to sin as the root of slavery which we must always try to get rid of if we want to be truly free and totally developed human persons.

The archbishop is complaining? Not so. I think he feels sorry that most of us do not understand what is meant to be free; that true freedom comes from God, not the kind that comes from heroes.

—GERARDO MAYOR,
205 Barrio Pangao,
Lipa City, Batangas

Dead wrong

I HAVE read Mac Ramirea's letter last March 3, 2004 and really, it was quite an opinion.

I take exception on only one of his statements, made I suspect to earn for Ramirez's organization media mileage, if not to put the government in a bad light. Below is the excerpt:

"Sadly, the Philippine government only gives the cold shoulder treatment to OFWs in distress... She sought the help of the Owwa but was shrugged off by the agency because she was categorized as an inactive member."

Ramirez is dead wrong. The example he raised, Josephine Asis Nariz, was provided financial assistance by the Overseas Workers Welfare Association in the amount of P10,000, although her last recorded date of contribution was in 1997. Her brother claimed the benefit check last Feb. 24.

As to the other issues Ramirez raised, he is free to say anything he wants but he should verify his facts the next time he expresses his views because responsibility is in the company of the freedom of expression.

—NICON F. FAMERONG, director,
Information and Public Service,
Department of Labor and Employment,
6/F DOLE Bldg., Intramuros, Manila

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Solution to pork shortage in sight

PORAC, Pampanga—Seeking to solve on a long-term basis the pork shortage in Cagayan Valley and Central Luzon, corn growers and hog raisers in Cagayan and feed millers and meat processors in Pampanga are establishing linkage—the first to be undertaken in the two regions.

"There are many points of complementation," said Renato Tayag Jr., founding president of the Pampanga Association of Meat Processors (Pampro), during the first day of the two-day tour of the Cagayan group in Pampanga on Monday.

The tour is a follow-up to the Pampanga group's visit to Cagayan two weeks ago.

In the partnership, Tayag said Cagayan, the country's top producer of yellow corn, could supply the grains and pork. Pampanga, on the other hand, can help supply breeder stock for hog and share the newest technology in feed milling, poultry and livestock production, and *tilapia* growing.

He said the pork shortage, which began in June last year following a halt in the importation of meat from countries affected by livestock diseases, accelerated initiatives in dialogues and partnerships in the private sector.

Dr. Gumerzindo Lasam, chief of the Department of Agriculture in Cagayan Valley, said the region could meet the demand for yellow corn in Pampanga.

About 60 percent of its annual production of 460,000 metric tons goes to the Central Luzon and Metro Manila markets. At least 95 percent of the transactions are done through traders.

Even while the volume of production is big, Cagayan has not yet gone into the export of yellow corn. "The problems are ... how to stabilize the prices and in modernizing production and storage," Lasam said.

He said the price of corn, selling at P9 for every kilo in mid-March, could drop to the break-even level of P3 in the next weeks when farmers agree to bring down costs due to lack of storage facilities.

"It's just now that we are linking the corn sector to the end-users like hog raisers or feed millers," Lasam told the INQUIRER.

Compared to Central Luzon that only has 27,000 hectares of corn areas despite a big livestock sector, Cagayan Valley has 127,000 hectares.

According to Cesar Rodriguez, regional DA chief, the corn supply for feeds in Central Luzon, mainly in Pampanga and Tarlac, usually lasts for only two weeks.

Corn production in the region was short by 500,000 metric tons in 2003, he said.

Lasam and Rodriguez said the DA is starting to assist now in marketing. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

ARMM teachers' fund scam may reach ₱700M, probers say

COTABATO CITY—The initial results of an investigation made by the Autonomous Region's Regional Legislative Assembly of the nonremittance of teachers' premiums to the Government Service Insurance System indicated that the missing fund would likely reach more than P700 million.

Assemblyman Tammy Ala of Maguindanao said they would expand the coverage of the investigation so that the government equity of service benefits, which the Department of Budget and Management had transferred to the GSIS for the past eight years would be included.

"This is in addition to the P170 million in salary-deducted shares that the Department of Education (DepEd)-ARMM is supposed to have remitted to the GSIS during the last eight years," Ala said.

He said the government equity easily amounts to about P750 million.

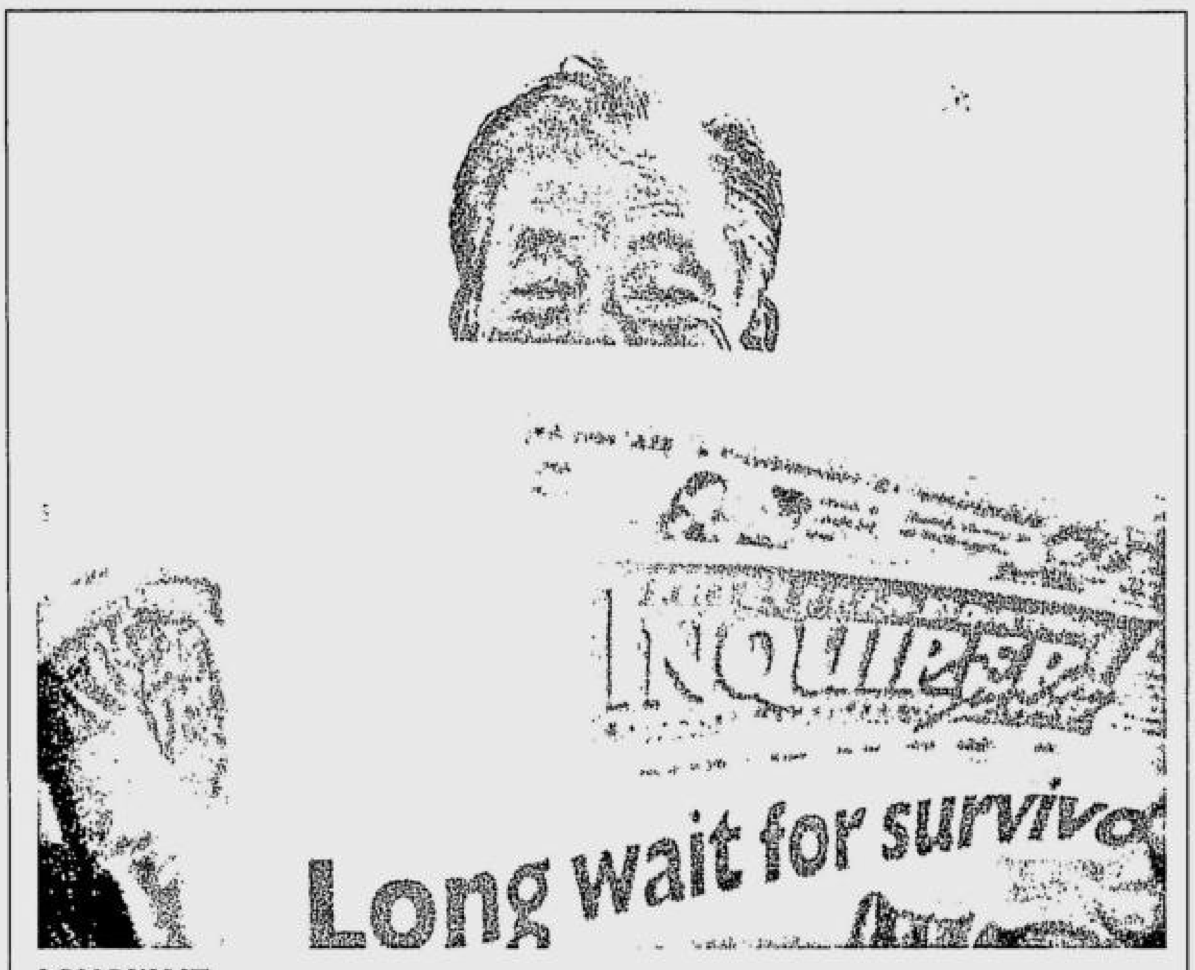
The investigation was launched after teachers in the region threatened not to serve in the elections unless the irregularity was corrected.

The teachers said while deductions were regularly made from their payroll, the GSIS would not grant them loans because the DepEd in the region has not remitted their contributions.

Citing GSIS records, Ala said previously remitted salary-deducted premiums were now incurring deficits in the GSIS because these were made to offset the lapses in subsequent remittances.

Ala said the government equity is usually transferred directly by the DBM to the GSIS, but in some cases, the government equity fund is released to the agency, which, in turn, issues a lump sum check in favor of the GSIS.

He said the RLA is looking into the possible culpability of some GSIS officials. *Nash B. Maulana and Charlie C. Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



LONG WAIT

EDWIN BACASMAS

Candidate for reelection Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. makes himself busy reading a copy of the INQUIRER during a sortie in the Bicol region with actor and presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. It's still a long wait for the results of the elections, however, for Pimentel and many other candidates.

Misamis towns remain on red tide alert

PLARIDEL, Misamis Occidental—The ban on the catching and selling of fish caught in the waters of this fishing town is still in effect.

This as environmental agencies from government and nongovernment organizations said the red tide phenomenon in this town has already spread to nearby Baliangao town particularly in Barangay Misom.

Plaridel town Mayor Edilma Bulawin told reporters Sunday that her office has issued the advisory beginning last Saturday upon consultation with the municipal health officer.

The ban covers not just the villages experiencing fish kill but throughout the 14 coastal villages of the town.

Bulawin said news of the fish kill only started to reach her Saturday morning.

Fishermen in the village of Santa Cruz told reporters the phenomenon first broke out Friday afternoon, affecting a five-kilometer stretch of fishing ground shared by Barangays Kauswagan, Lao Santa Cruz and Santa Cruz.

There were even pieces of information that red tide also afflicted the fishing waters of Barangay Mansabay in Lopez Jaena town, south of here.

Bulawin said she is awaiting the pronouncement of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) after its expert took water samples from the area before deciding on the fate of the advisory her office earlier issued.

The BFAR expert, according to Bulawin, has promised to release the findings on Monday.

As of Sunday, fishes continue to die in the coasts of the three affected fishing villages of this town.

Residents have buried some but many continue to float in the waters.

The coastline of the three villages has become smelly due to the decomposing fish.

According to some residents, there were villages in Barangay Kauswagan who gathered the dying fish Saturday and cooked them.

There was no report of illness, however, said Kauswagan village chief Amos Lapinig.

Environmental group Save Nature Society said it is still determining what caused the red tide. *Ryan D. Rosauro, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

1,000 students of state school protest fee hikes

By Anselmo Roque
PDI Central Luzon Desk

SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ—Some 1,000 students of the Central Luzon State University (CLSU) here, supported by leaders of big organizations in Central Luzon, rallied on Monday to protest increases in tuition and school fees.

Angelo de la Cruz, chair of the Anakbayan-CLSU, said their rally, timed during the CLSU administrative council meeting, was meant to call for a reconsideration of the plan to increase tuition from P40 to P100 per unit and miscellaneous fees.

He said other fees like medical and dental, laboratory, registration, library, athletic, audio-visual, recreation, charity, scientific journal, guidance and counseling, insurance, national service training program, among others things, were planned to be increased.

Under the plan, incoming freshmen students who will enroll in 23 units of the science curriculum and two laboratory classes will pay P4,554.50 from P1,587, he said.

For non-science curriculum students with 20 units and one laboratory class, the total fee will be P4,154.50 from P1,427.50, he said.

He said students will also pay a development fee of P500.

A check with the CLSU administration showed the planned tuition increase has yet to be approved by the university's board of regents.

The increase was earlier approved by the CLSU administrative council. The proposal came from the university council of deans and directors.

CLSU president Dr. Rodolfo Undan, who met with the student leaders on Monday, agreed to a dialogue with them on Wednesday.

He is expected to present the rationale behind the proposal for the tuition adjustment for incoming freshmen students, transferees and old returning students.

Undan also called on the students to present proposals on how best the university can meet its obligation now that its regular budget has not increased.

The students walked out earlier from their classes and marched along the main roads of the university and then massed in front of the university public affairs building where the members of the administrative council were meeting.

Erap ally defects to GMA

AFTER Edward Hagedorn of Palawan, Rodrigo Duterte of Davao, Casimiro Yñares of Rizal and Ningning Lazaro of Laguna, now comes another Estrada ally, former Environment Secretary Antonio Cerilles who has joined the growing list of political kingpins supporting the candidacy of President Macapagal-Arroyo in the May 2004 elections.

Cerilles, who was widely credited for delivering a landslide win for Estrada in Mindanao in the 1998 elections, brings with him a solid political machinery of more than 5,000 local leaders who pledged their support for the candidacy of Ms Macapagal in Molave town Zamboanga del Sur on Sunday.

"We came out in the open supporting Ms Macapagal because, among all the candidates, it is only she who has a program, platform of governance which is sustainable, realistic and futuristic," Cerilles said in a statement.

Cases of abuse of women in Negros continue to rise

By Romy G. Amarado
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—The number of reported cases of violence against women in Negros Oriental continued to rise with husbands as the consistent top violators of women's rights.

Records at the Women and Children Concern Desk (WCCD) of the Negros Oriental Provincial Police Office showed that 779 cases were reported in 2003.

Of the number, 471 were cases of physical injuries or wife battery, said Senior Insp. Rosalinda Abellon, chief of the WCCD and police community relations.

Other cases included rape, acts of lasciviousness, threats and abandonment, she added.

Abellon said there were already 129 cases in January and February alone. Almost half or 60 cases were wife battery, she added.

She also noted that the number of cases in 2003 were higher compared to the number of cases reported in 2001 and 2002.

Although she did not cite figures, Abellon said husbands were the top abusers.

She said immediate causes of women's assault were jealousy, financial problem and drunkenness.

But she said she believed these were merely symptoms because the root was the cultural orientation of Filipinos, which is paternalistic.

Until now, Abellon said Filipino males still believe that they are superior to women.

The increase in the number of reported cases also indicated the women's growing concern and awareness of their rights due to the help of the government and non-government organizations, especially women's groups.

"We have very strong women's groups here," Abellon said.

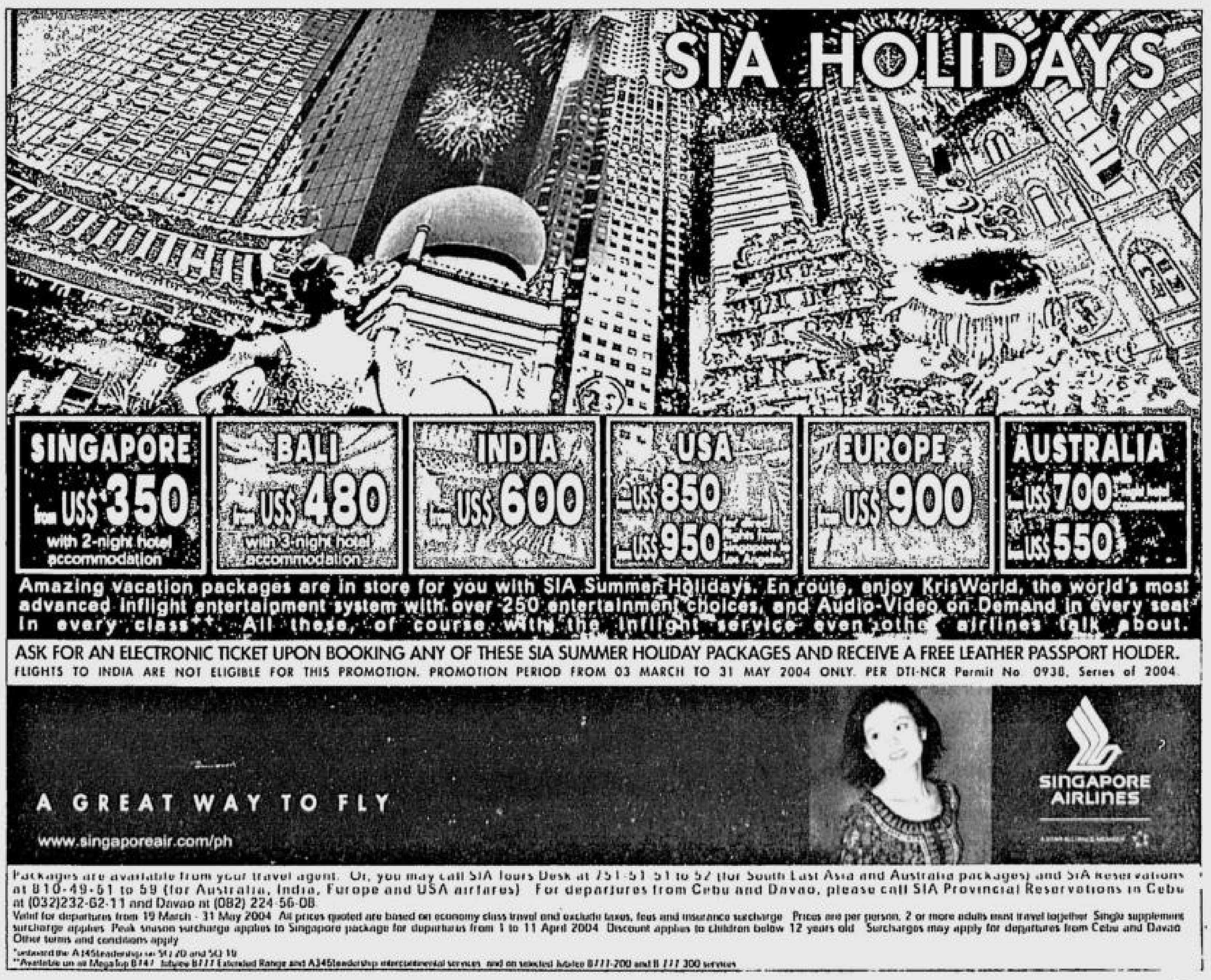
Local government units, she said, were also very supportive of the move to empower women.

Abellon said the WCCD has also been put up in every police station in the province to attend to cases involving women and children.

Last year, a women's center was opened as a temporary shelter for abused women.

Abellon said victims are now encouraged to report their plight either to the police, to other government agencies or women's groups because of support from these institutions.

"Most victims were apparently not interested to pursue their cases in court. Most of the victims did not even attend in the preliminary hearing of their cases," she said.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Group asks graft probers to punish gov on fund scam

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—An anti-corruption group in Sarangani is urging the Ombudsman to impose sanctions on Gov. Miguel Escobar for not implementing a suspension order against 14 provincial employees linked to a multimillion-peso fund scam.

Fr. Fred Maghanoy, chair of the Sarangani People's Action for Reform and Good Governance (Spare Go), told the INQUIRER that they are now preparing a petition asking the Ombudsman-Mindanao to impose appropriate sanctions on the governor for his failure to implement the suspension order.

In the petition, Spare Go will also ask the Ombudsman to include in the 60-day preventive suspension elective officials of Sarangani led by Escobar.

Spare Go will go to the Ombudsman office in Davao City early next week to file the petition.

On Feb. 24, Deputy Ombudsman for Mindanao Antonio Valenzuela issued a 60-day preventive suspension without pay against provincial administrator Perla Maglinte, provincial accountant Maria Camanay, provincial agriculturist Romeo Miole, and 11 other employees in the province.

They are among the accused in the graft charges filed by Spare Go in connection with the alleged illegal release and diversion of more than P50 million of the province's fund.

The other accused include Escobar, Vice Gov. Felipe Constantino and several board members. But the Ombudsman spared the elective officials from the suspension citing a prohibition by the local government code.

In his order, Valenzuela directed Escobar to immediately implement the suspension order.

Up to this time, however, the 14 employees ordered suspended continue to report for work.

The office of the governor refused to receive the copy of the Ombudsman order and instead told the mailman to serve the order to Camilo Dionio, Escobar's legal counsel.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to contact Escobar.

In a telephone interview, Isaac Grafilo, assistant provincial information officer, said the governor's mobile phone was lost right inside the governor's office. *Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Soldiers say they found 'hidden' Moro rebs' camp

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Soldiers of the 44th Infantry Battalion discovered a hidden camp of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) inside the Sipakit Complex in Sirawai, Zamboanga del Norte on Friday.

The camp, according to Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko, could accommodate around 300 persons.

Kyamko said the MILF rebels may have abandoned or temporarily evacuated their camp after the March 10 encounter near the complex that left two rebels dead.

The encounter happened four days before the scheduled consultation between the MILF and the Malaysian Ceasefire Monitoring Committee in Sirawai.

Earlier, local officials of Sirawai expressed opposition to the holding of the consultation in the town for security reasons. They even passed a resolution expressing their concern.

"The sight of huge armed groups other than the military authorities will surely result in confusion and chaos," Sirawai Mayor Romeo Carino said.

MILF rebels and Malaysian observers are expected to attend the consultation. *Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

SURVEILLANCE, ABDUCTIONS

Bayan Muna assails harassment

LUCENA CITY—Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo has assailed the continuous assault and harassment against their group by the military and other armed elements of the government.

Ocampo said they got a "decoded radio communication" on Feb. 12 in Antique, which allegedly contained a directive to all members of the police to monitor Bayan Muna and other progressive party-list groups such as Anakpawis, Gabriela, Anak ng Bayan, Migrante and Suara Bangsa Moro.

Ocampo said the decoded message appeared to state that the surveillance should be conducted every Friday of the week.

Ocampo said a sign of the continued harassment was the illegal arrest and detention of Teresita Abellera, Bayan Muna municipal coordinator in Lupao, Nueva Ecija, on Feb. 8 allegedly by elements of the 71st Infantry Battalion.

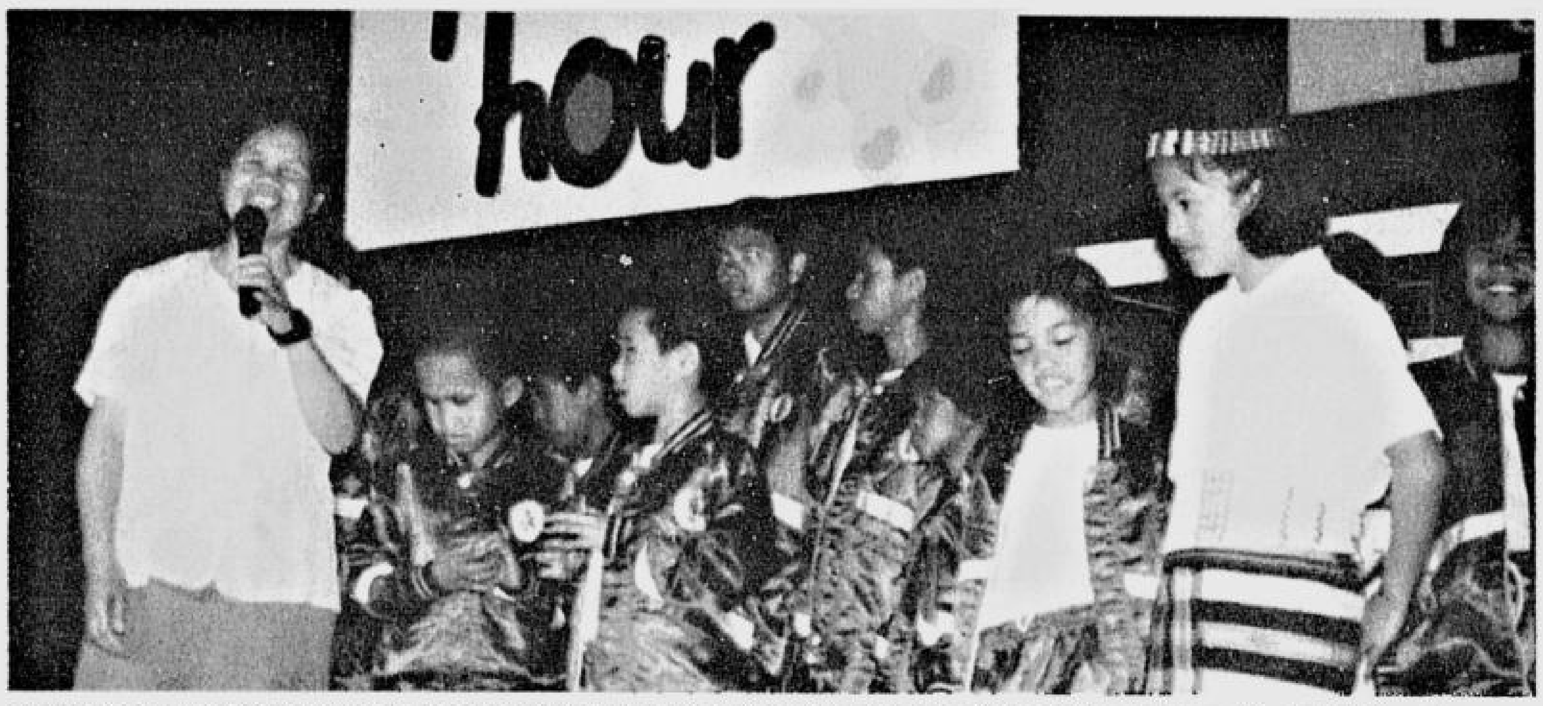
Ocampo also cited the abduction and disappearance on Feb. 21 of Jacqueline Paguntalan and Rolando Fortaleza, both Bayan Muna organizers in Baybay, northern Leyte.

He also cited the abduction and disappearance on March 7 of Bayan Muna coordinators Jaime Rodriguez and Isiderio delos Santos in Tinambac, Camarines Sur.

"We have every reason to believe that the government, primarily through the military, is bent on preventing us from winning in the coming polls. Apart from further acts of political repression, we also anticipate massive electoral fraud to shave off votes cast for our party," Ocampo said in an e-mailed response to a query.

A recent report revealed that Bayan Muna and other leftist party-list groups were leading in surveys for party-list contenders.

"Our track record ... speak of the kind of advocacy that the powers-that-be do not want to see again in Congress," said Ocampo. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



CHILD members of the Northern Luzon Association of the Blind sing at the launching of the Children's Hour at the BCF University Theater in Baguio City.

EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Children's Hour raises more than ₱1M in Baguio

By Gobleth Moulic
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—When local school officials appealed last year to teachers and employees of private firms to help the city's children fulfill their dreams and build their future, everyone was moved to support the campaign.

On Saturday, the children, including blind students from the Northern Luzon Association for the Blind, were pleased when the group announced that they had initially collected P1,164,293.60 since they started the collection last year.

The announcement was made at the launching of the Children's Hour at the BCF University theater here.

This amount would be used to send street children to school, said Evangeline Mayuga, executive director of Children's Hour Philippines Inc.

Children's Hour is a fund-raising campaign that supports programs committed to the welfare and development of children. Its vision is to give the child "the basic right to enjoy a happy, healthy, safe and fulfilling future."

"Children should have good education. They do not belong to the streets. We are grateful because Baguio is doing its share to help these street kids," Mayuga told the INQUIRER.

Speaking on behalf of children in Baguio, nine-year-old Edythe Alexis Ramos of the Small World Christian School thanked the people, companies and employees from the public and private sectors.

Dr. Reinaldo Bautista, board chair of the University of Baguio, said they are targeting 50 percent of all employees in Baguio to donate an hour of their earnings.

"Every single centavo will go directly to the children. It does not matter whether you are a janitor or the president of the company," Bautista, who also chairs the steering committee of Children's Hour in Baguio, said.

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Anti-measles campaign takes giant steps in Sulu

By Jo Clemente

JOLO, Sulu—"We were not provided funds for the program, but we were determined to make Sulu measles-free."

Coming from the provincial health officer of Sulu—where measles is the second leading cause of infant mortality (64 out of every 1,000 live births)—this was a very strong statement. The national average is 49 per 1,000 live births.

But for Dr. Farrah Tan-Omar and her team at the Sulu Integrated Provincial Health Office (IPHO), the goal was not impossible to meet. At the "Ligtas Tigdas 2004" review held last week, she reported a 90-percent coverage, in which 134,347 children from a target of 150,084 were given anti-measles vaccines by volunteers in the most unlikely places.

Cultural barriers

Crossing cultural barriers, war zones and rough terrain characteristic of the province, the residents came together for the sake of their children.

"We vaccinated by the waterfalls, in the forest, in the *kariton* (pushcart), on the streets and on the shore, in the homes, even in the banca. We braved the roughest of roads and turbulent seas unconsciously risking our lives," Tan-Omar said.

"Somebody fell off a bridge and a motorcycle, a banca overturned, a volunteer pissed at and spat with Vitamin A by a patient. But at the end of the day, we feel good because we have worked as one."

She described the performance as an all-time high for a government health program.

According to Nayda Julkarnain, nurse coordinator of the IPHO, the figure could have been higher at 98 percent had the census that determined the target number of children been more accurate. She attributed this to the mobility of people displaced by strife.

The "Ligtas Tigdas" is a month-long anti-measles vaccination program launched by the Department of Health nationwide as a follow-up to its 1998 initiative. Targets are children born between February 1996 and May 1, 2003.

2008 goal

A highly contagious disease, measles is a leading cause of childhood deaths in the Philippines and an outbreak is likely to occur every four years if those left unprotected remain susceptible to the virus.

The program goal is to reduce child mortality in the country by eliminating measles by 2008. While the vaccines came from United Nations Children Fund, the cost of undertaking the project is borne by the Centers for Health Development and DOH-retained hospitals.

LGU advice

The local government units helped much in tapping barangay networks and in determining cultural sensitivities in the areas, Tan-Omar said.

For instance, in Badjao communities, she said, the local officials advised the IPHO team not to go house to house but instead wait for them in a nearby place to immunize their children. The majority of Sulu's population are Tausogs.

Tan-Omar said only three of the 410 barangays were not reached. Despite their military escorts, she said they were extra careful and sensitive. "There are areas where we should not have the military with us and others where we should have them."

Mobilizing human and logistical support came in many forms. Augmenting the IPHO team were 215 volunteers from private and government groups, like school nurses of the Department of Education and Sulu Sanitarium.

Donations came in kind—streamers, t-shirts for volunteers, gasoline for vehicles and life vests for those who would cross the open seas to reach the island barangays. Pump boats were lent.

Non-government organizations, such as the Enrich Sulu, through their barangay health teams, helped mobilize their project communities.

Recognition

Last week, certificates of recognition were given to the top five performers of the "Ligtas Tigdas" program. These were the towns of Jolo, Patikul, Pandami, Luuk and Panamao. Jolo and Patikul surpassed their targets.

Dr. Nassier Jalani, Patikul health officer, said even transients in the town were immunized. The town has 30 barangays.

Health Undersecretary Milagros Fernandez, who was present at the program review, said that once again, Sulu was back on its feet and the example shown by the people was enough reason to say that endeavors like this can be done "despite the lack of financial support from the national and regional government."

She noted that the multisectoral effort was finally realized due to good planning, organization and leadership by example.

ARMM assembly passes tougher anti-illegal logging bill

COTABATO CITY—In an effort to save what is left in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao's balding forests, the region's law making body passed a bill that would protect ARMM's forest cover.

Describing it as last-ditch efforts to protect the region's future generations, Speaker Ismael Abubakar of the Regional Legislative Assembly said he and the 23-member legislative body hoped that Gov. Parouk Hussin would sign into law the Regional Sustainable Forest Management Act.

Maguindanao Assemblyman Suharto Midtimbang, author of the bill, said the bill hopes to achieve three things—efficient and effective management of ARMM's remaining forests, permanency of the region's forest land boundaries and conservation of forests using Islamic ways of environmental protection.

According to Midtimbang, forests are gifts from God that everyone should preserve and protect.

"Otherwise, Allah would punish those who destroy what He gives us," he said in a news conference.

In his desire to preserve the region's forest before its constituents suffer the brunt of nature, Midtimbang said his bill includes provisions that would impose heavier penalties for illegal logging.

ARMM, composed of the provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Basilan, is one of the regions in the country where illegal logging is rampant, according to the region's Department of Environment and Natural Resources Office.

Although he did not give figures on the remaining forest cover, Midtimbang is convinced that the frequent flash floods and soil erosion in ARMM's forests are indications of continued denudation.

"This is my legacy to the people of ARMM, our children will remember me for this," he said.

Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

ROUNDUP

2 women held for drugs

BAGUIO CITY—Police arrested two women in a drug buy-bust operation here on Monday. But one of the suspects, who identified herself only as Analiza, denied selling to several Baguio undercover policemen 47.4 grams of shabu worth P94,000. Police also arrested her companion, who identified herself as Arsenia.

Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

3 inmates flee

LINGAYEN, Pangasinan—Three detainees of the district jail in Burgos town escaped recently by digging a hole through the jail's concrete wall. Police reports identified the escapees as Michael Simeniano Tela, 22, of Binalonan town; Alrandy Pascua Timbol, 20, of Infanta town; and Wilfredo Doloretos, 32, also of Infanta. Police said the suspects are facing charges of car theft, robbery and rape. Reports said jail guards took the detainees out of their cell to fetch water for the jail's water tank. But when the guards were not looking, the detainees cracked a part of the wall and escaped. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Rebel killed in clash

LEGAZPI CITY—A New People's Army rebel was killed during a clash with Army troops in Sitio Tarictican, Barangay Sto. Niño, Iriga City on Thursday. The clash, which lasted for about 30 minutes, happened at about 4:30 a.m. The Army men recovered a .38-caliber revolver and antigovernment documents from the scene.

Joyce Mejillano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Phivolcs equipment stolen

LEGAZPI CITY—Barely a month after a global positioning system (GPS) of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology in Barangay Padang here was stolen, Phivolcs resident volcanologist Ed Laguerta was hopeful that the equipment would be returned to them. Laguerta said the GPS' absence is a big loss to their operation since it is one of the vital facilities used to detect deformations at the slopes of Mayon Volcano. Laguerta called on those responsible for the GPS loss to return the equipment, which cannot be used by the thieves.

Ronnie Lorejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Woman killed in ambush

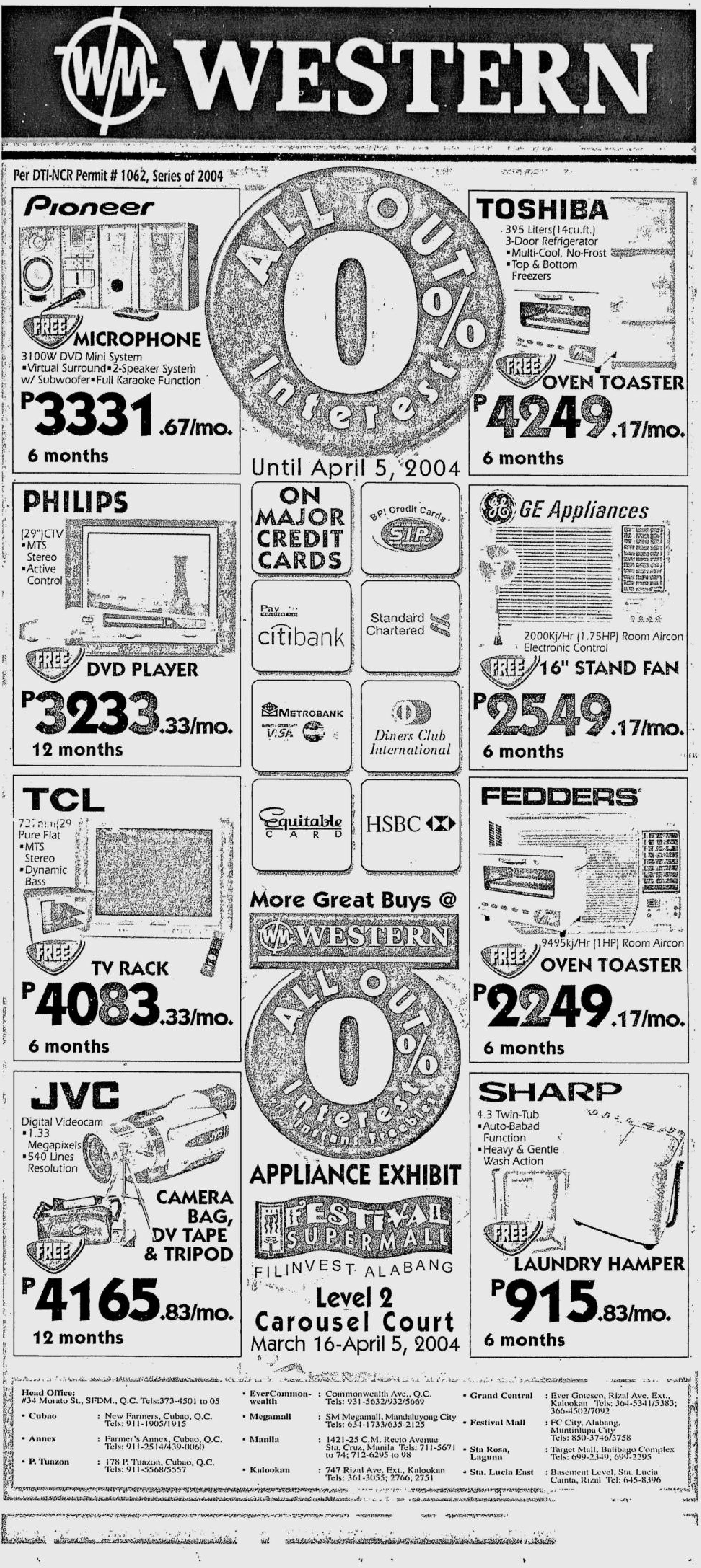
TANAUAN CITY—The wife of a barangay kagawad was killed when the family car she was driving was ambushed by unidentified armed men on Wednesday. Killed was Gretel Mabait, wife of Joselito Mabait, barangay kagawad of Sambat in this city. Police investigation revealed that the family was on its way home from the Marcela Arcade in this city aboard the family car when unidentified armed men started shooting at them. Gretel was killed on the spot while her husband sustained two bullet wounds in the body. Their two children were unhurt. The couple was reportedly in the police drug list and was receiving death threats from the New People's Army.

Mel Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Mayoral bet 'harassed'

DARAGA, Albay—Unidentified gunmen on Friday morning sprayed bullets at the house of Daraga mayoral candidate Wilfredo "Boy" Mayor at Barangay Tagas here. Police recovered empty shells of M-16 rifles in the crime scene. No casualty has been reported. Mayor, who is also facing an estafa case, dismissed the incident as a clear harassment against him. Mayor is running against incumbent Mayor Jerry Jaucian, who denied involvement in the incident.

Joyce Mejillano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



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FPJ camp to Lacson: Quit

From page A1

Macapagal, Poe and former Education Secretary Raul Roco.

Because of Lacson's poor showing in surveys, Malacañang also considers Poe the main opponent of Ms Macapagal.

"The survey results show that Mr. Ronnie Poe is one of the two top contenders," the President's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said. He recalled Ms Macapagal's statement that she would only debate with Poe, the other leading contender.

De Castro unfazed

Sen. Noli de Castro, Ms Macapagal's running mate, laughed off Lacson's statement that Poe should agree to be his (Lacson's) running mate because he could easily beat De Castro in the vice presidential race.

"Isn't it that I had high ratings even before I decided to run? Poe's ratings rose when I decided to run for vice president," De Castro said in a phone interview.

He said he was unfazed by the possibility, being raised by Lacson, that Poe would slide down and threaten his chances of being elected the country's No. 2 official.

"Not really. In the first place, I don't think Poe will slide down. He has invested a lot in the campaign," De Castro said.

Referring to today's scheduled talks between Poe and Lacson, Enrile said there was "no point of negotiating if that (Poe sliding down) is the condition" being set by Lacson.

"Maybe he (Lacson) does not really want unification," Enrile said.

Jinggoy Estrada, a son of deposed President Joseph Estrada, who is a close friend of Poe's, said Poe's sliding down to be Lacson's vice presidential candidate was "next to impossible."

"If he (Lacson) insists, FPJ should better not attend (today's talks)," said Jinggoy, also a KNP senatorial candidate. "If that is the agenda, we might as well advise FPJ not to attend."

Jinggoy noted that Poe's KNP was "more organized" than Lacson's group.

Ernesto Maceda, another KNP senatorial candidate, said Poe would not give way to Lacson. "FPJ is way ahead of the surveys and as you can see in our rallies, he is drawing 20,000-30,000 per rally," he claimed.

Maceda recalled that 2 million Poe supporters had signed a petition asking him to run for president, which the actor accepted. "So how can he (Poe) now slide down or not continue to run?" he said.

Stay neutral

Housing Secretary Michael Defensor, campaign spokesperson for Ms Macapagal, said the President was not worried if the two opposition candidates agreed to unite.

He said the possibility of unifying the opposition was something that had been talked about by their leaders even before the campaign period started.

"That is a natural (effort) and we were prepared for that right from the start," Defensor said in an RMN interview.

But he betrayed his worry over a unified opposition when he urged Estrada not to broker the unification talks between Poe and Lacson.

"Personally, I was hoping that with the President's show of compassion to him, he (Estrada) would stay neutral instead of actively participating in the [negotiations]," Defensor said. Defensor, one of the congressmen who led the impeachment move against Estrada, became Ms Macapagal's personal emissary to Estrada following his downfall.

The President has justified the breach in Estrada's detention, which enabled him to sneak to his vacation house across from Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal, where he was supposed to be detained, and even to go to his San Juan residence.

But Ms Macapagal has maintained that there was no politics involved. She said she was treating Estrada with compassion out of respect for his poor supporters who saw in his condition their own oppression.

Underdog

Defensor conceded that despite Ms Macapagal's policy of humane treatment for Estrada, the former President was still playing a key role in the opposition.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said the administration was prepared for Poe and Lacson each seeking the presidency or a union of the two for the May 10 election.

He said the administration had internal surveys "which tell us how things would look like, whether there are three or four presidential candidates."

"And we're prepared for it," said Drilon, chair of the Liberal Party, which is part of the administration K-4 coalition.

In Panabo City, Davao del Norte, K-4 campaign manager Gabriel Claudio said the administration coalition had long anticipated a unified opposition. "It is something we have long prepared for," he said.

Claudio said K-4 wanted voters to look at Ms Macapagal as an underdog once Poe and Lacson agree to join forces.

"For all they know, a convergence just might make an underdog out of the President, at least in the minds of the public, because they are ganging up on one candidate. That is something they have to look out for," he said.

Change strategy

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda said K-4 would conduct a special survey on voters' reaction to the possibility of a unified opposition ticket.

"I think we have to change strategy and reposition the President by mobilizing campaign resources through better targeting," Salceda said.

While Lacson said there was no prepared agenda for his meeting with Poe, he said he planned to take up with the KNP standard-bearer the status of his lone senatorial candidate, Nueva Vizcaya Rep. Carlos Padilla as their common candidate.

"I will ask him why the KNP has 12 senatorial candidates even when we agreed that Padilla would be a common candidate," he said.

Lacson would go into the meeting after his "(presidential) job interview" with the Personnel Management Association of the Philippines this morning and his speech before the Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce early in the afternoon.

He denied that his ally, Makati Rep. Agapito Aquino, Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino secretary general, was the one brokering the meeting and that he would host it.

"(This common friend) is not from our camp," Lacson said, adding that the person called him while he was barnstorming in Cebu amid the word war between Lacson and Poe's handlers. *With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana and Gil Cabacungan Jr.*

FRESH recruits of the communist-led New People's Army perform a drill in their jungle hideout in Lianga, Surigao del Sur. REUTERS

Reds accused of using polls ...

From page A1

Front) to please lower the tax because it's too high?" the mayors told Gonzales.

The mayors face assassination unless they cave in to extortion by the NDF's armed wing, the New People's Army, ahead of the May 10 elections. Three mayoral candidates have since been murdered, while three legislators have survived NPA ambushes.

As President Macapagal-Arroyo pursues a peace settlement with the communists, the rebels are using bribery and intimidation to get concessions via the ballot box that they have so far failed to win after 35 years of civil war, according to Gonzales, who received the terrified mayors of Quezon province last month.

107 NPA fronts

Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, Armed Forces spokesperson, said the 8,800-strong NPA, which operates in 107 "guerrilla fronts" across the country, was "strengthening and multiplying (its) front organizations to give political support for (its) armed struggle."

Gonzales alleged Friday that three legislators from party-list group Bayan Muna had funneled millions of pesos in pork barrel to the NPA. "They are using their money to strengthen the armed struggle," he said.

But Bayan Muna legislator Satur Ocampo denied that his party, which the military suspects is a communist front, was financing the NPA rebels.

Ocampo told Agence France Presse that about P50 million worth of pork barrel funds alloted to his party went to legitimate development projects.

Keeping with reality

Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, spokeperson of the Communist Party of the Philippines, said NPA "taxation" was in keeping with the "reality that there are two governments in the Philippines today, though the military refuses to admit it."

Rosal said exiled communist leaders based in Utrecht, Netherlands, had nothing to do with "permit-to-campaign" the fees that the NPA was demanding from candidates in the May elections. Candidates who refuse to pay the fees are barred from campaigning in NPA areas.

"Our Utrecht-based comrades have nothing to do with the PTC collections. Those politicians who are complaining should better address their gripes to the local leaders of the revolutionary movement in their areas," the CPP spokesperson said in a mobile phone interview.

He also made it clear that candidates should really exert efforts to negotiate with the "authorized" NPA representatives in various localities.

"Negotiation would not necessarily revolve around the issue of PTC payment alone. That's why it is important for us to meet and talk. Meeting us is already one form of showing respect for the revolutionary movement," Rosal also criticized Gonzales for accusing Bayan Muna lawmakers of spending pork funds to help the rebels, saying the government "is virtually signaling" the military, police and paramilitary forces "to attack, snatch, harass and kill the organizers and supporters" of left-wing parties.

Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita, however, said the NPA had collected at least half a million pesos from each congressional candidate.

Sometimes candidates were ordered to pay in kind, including guns, said Armed Forces Vice Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia. "We have been able to persuade or dissuade several of these politicians from doing that," he said.

While militant groups asked the NPA to stop its collection of PTC fees, the government demanded at the Norway talks that the communist guerrillas stop extorting from politicians. NDF peace negotiators, on the other hand, got the government to sign a joint communiqué pledging to help convince the United States and its Western allies to remove the rebels from a blacklist of "foreign terror organizations."

Coalition gov't

Gonzales said he believed that by fielding candidates for congressional and local posts, as well as "infiltrating government bureaucracies," the communist rebels hoped to eventually join a "coalition government."

He is not alone in suspecting conspiracy.

Brig. Gen. Victor Corpus, citing intelligence information, last month branded opposition vice presidential candidate Loren Legarda a "political prostitute" for allegedly "consorting with the enemies of the state."

Exiled communist rebel leader Jose Maria Sison had publicly endorsed Senator Legarda, the running mate of opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe.

"I believe that if you became the vice president you would be in a better position to take initiatives in pushing the peace negotiations forward to the goal of a just and lasting peace," Sison said in a statement.

The military later reprimanded Corpus.

Gonzales said rebel leaders had told him that despite the talks, the communists were convinced they would take power within 10 years.

"They said a revolutionary situation exists in the Philippines today and I'm tempted to say as much," he said. *Reports from AFP and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Disqualification cases poised against GMA

From page A1

ty Sweepstakes Office officials last week for spending government funds for Ms Macapagal's campaign.

Grounds

In Santiago City, former Solicitor General Frank Chavez, who is seeking a Senate seat under Roco's Alyansa ng Pag-Asa, said on Sunday night that the possible grounds which would be cited by the Roco camp in seeking Ms Macapagal's disqualification were the following:

- Use of Philhealth and Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office funds in distributing health insurance cards bearing the likeness of Ms Macapagal.
- Diversion of agriculture and health funds by granting subsidies for non-existent farms.
- Use of public works funds and the road user's tax for Ms Macapagal's ongoing road works projects.
- Use of the Study Now, Pay Later program, which grants students loans of up to P8,000 per semester, payable in 5 to 10 years.

Under election laws, vote-buying, use of public funds for an election campaign and distribution of prohibited election propaganda are grounds for possible disqualification.

The legal team is set to file the case before the Alyansa slate goes to Eastern Visayas for a campaign sortie. Chavez is assisted by fellow Alyansa senatorial candidates Melanio Mauricio, Perfecto Yasay, Nicanor Gatmaytan and Edno Joson. All five are lawyers, and Gatmaytan and Yasay are members of the New York Bar.

Resurrected

Data gathered by the team showed that Ms Macapagal had already appropriated P200 million of the P500-million study loan grant on the day the program was resurrected by Malacañang on Jan. 27.

The program had long been mandated by a law authored by Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino, but is now dubbed "Students Assistance Fund for Education for a Strong Republic."

Ironically, the law was drafted by Roco while he was working as a legal aide to Aquino before martial law.

Bro. Rolando Dizon, chair of the Commission on Higher Education, had admitted that the relaunching of the program was tied to Ms Macapagal's presidential campaign.

"It will not hurt her own campaign. Let's not be hypocritical in saying that this has absolutely no political component. It does," Dizon said at a press conference.

Surveys

Explaining Ms Macapagal's surge in recent surveys, Dr. Jaime Galvez-Tan, political strategist and spokesperson for Roco, said on Friday that the President was targeting vote-rich areas where surveys were likely to take place.

"It has a subconscious, subliminal effect," said Galvez-Tan of the President's distributing Philhealth cards and other government dole-outs days before pollsters distribute survey questions to identified respondents.

Influence

"Right at the field level, they're able to influence for their own gains, using government largesse, to unduly affect the results. (I hope) the people will see this deception of GMA," Galvez-Tan said.

He said he was told that besides Philhealth cards the government distributed last week P3,000 worth of livelihood grants to women in celebration of the Women's month.

"But I just got a call from the people in the provinces that the Philhealth cards were not being honored. In particularly, (there is) this is doctor from Camarines Norte (who learned that) the cards are not yet activated," Galvez-Tan said.

Imprisonment

In his petition, Salazar said violation of the law and Comelec rules and regulations was punishable by imprisonment of between one and six years and disqualification from public office.

Under Section 6 of Republic Act No. 9006 or the Fair Elections Act, all registered parties and candidates shall have equal access to media.

The law provides that each candidate or registered political party for a nationally elective office shall be entitled to not more than 120 minutes of television advertisement and 180 minutes of radio advertisements. Local candidates shall not have more than 60 minutes of television ads and 90 minutes of radio commercials.

Gloria campaign ads 'well within bounds'

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has kept her political advertisements within the limits set by the Commission on Elections, Malacañang said yesterday.

Her spokesperson, Ignacio Bunye, and campaign spokesperson, Michael Defensor, made separate statements after some complainants filed a disqualification case against Ms Macapagal for allegedly going beyond the Comelec-prescribed 120-minute campaign advertisement time for television and 180 minutes for radio.

"We are not disturbed at all by these allegations. They have been part and parcel of the opposition's demolition job," Bunye said in a statement. He said the President's political ads and expenditures were well within bounds.

Defensor welcomed the filing of the suit, saying it was better to bring this to the proper forum to be resolved instead of the opposition just throwing brickbats at the President.

He said the opposition wanted the Comelec to declare government infomercials featuring the President in violation of election rules.

"But the law is very clear. Political advertisements are those that are asking for votes but an ad talking about the President's job and programs, even if it features her, is really part of her job as President," Defensor said in an RMN interview.

Bunye said the records of the broadcast stations would show that the President had not exceeded the limit.

"We urge all parties to settle down to sober debate instead of whipping up charges and rumors that have nothing to do with the public welfare," he said. *Juliet Labog-Javellana*

Gov't junking of ₱1 fare hike bid seen

By Clarissa S. Batino

THERE'S fear among transport groups that the government may not grant their request for a P1 interim fare hike.

Today is the deadline set by jeepney groups for the government to grant their petition.

A transport official, who asked not to be named, said that jeepney groups were already advised during the March 5 meeting between government officials and heads of transport groups of the pitfalls of a P1 fare hike.

During that meeting, the government committed to decide on the P1-provisional increase not later than March 16.

Jeepney groups agreed to call off the strike scheduled last week to wait for the government's decision today.

"A fare hike would trigger a wage hike and increases in the prices of basic commodities. It would be very detrimental to the economy," the transport official said.

Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza earlier said that the labor department was worried that a fare hike would push labor groups to demand a wage hike. When this happens, he said, the trade department feared that shops would close and jobs would be lost as businesses could not finance the increase in production cost.

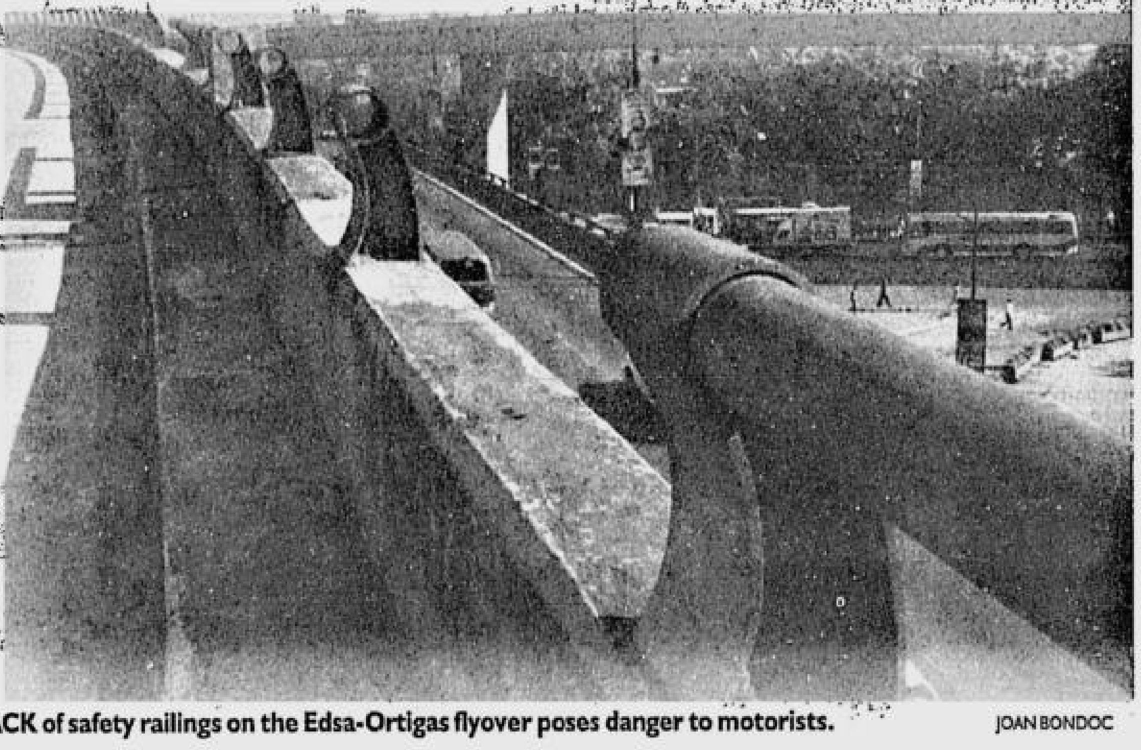
Since last year, workers' groups have been demanding a P125 per day increase in wages across-the-board on the current minimum daily wage of P233 in the National Capital Region and P234 on the average nationwide.

A lawyer for the transport groups said a P1 fare hike should only have a slight impact on a minimum wage worker.

The P1 increase should translate to an additional P52 to the monthly transport budget of a worker in Metro Manila taking home P7,280 a month.

The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board would hear today the jeepney groups' petition for a P1 interim hike as well as on their regular petition for a P1.50 hike in the first 5 kms, plus 37 centavos for each succeeding km. Bus groups want a P2 hike in the first 5 kms.

MMDA worried over flyover rail thefts


LACK of safety railings on the Edsa-Ortigas flyover poses danger to motorists. JOAN BONDOC

By Margaux Ortiz

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority yesterday called on the public to help expose the thieves responsible for the disappearance of safety railings in Metro Manila's flyovers.

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said in an interview that the absence of the safety railings could seriously endanger the lives of motorists.

Fernando explained that the railings act as safety devices to stop the accidental bumping and falling of vehicles at the sides of the flyovers.

"Besides, the gap where the railings once were look very unsightly," Fernando stressed. "It makes Metro Manila look like an unkempt place."

The MMDA chair said steel railings measuring up to a few kilometers have disappeared from the flyovers on Edsa-Timog, Katipunan, Edsa-Santolan, Makati-Buendia and Edsa-Ortigas.

He said the thieves could have made off with the railings at night or even during the day while posing as Department of Public Works and Highways or MMDA personnel.

Fernando said the railings, made of steel and aluminum, could easily be sold in junk shops.

He disclosed that the railings are worth P2,000 to P3,000 per meter, with the steel barriers selling for P14 per kilo and the aluminum ones for P20 per kilo.

Fernando appealed to the public to report suspicious people tampering with the railings.

The MMDA chair said concerned citizens could call MMDA hotline 136 or police emergency assistance 117.

Fernando also warned junk shops not to buy the railings, which are covered by the anti-fencing law, or face the necessary sanctions.

This time, bank robbers used mountain bikes

By Luige del Puerto

BARELY a week after motorcycle-riding robbers hit an armored car in Rodriguez, Rizal, mountain bike-riding robbers struck yesterday, this time hitting a rural bank in Cainta, Rizal.

Pretending to be clients, three men entered the Cardona Rural Bank on A. Bonifacio Avenue one at a time around 11 a.m., police said.

Once inside, they disarmed the bank's lone guard of his service firearm, and declared a robbery.

They were armed with two 38mm caliber revolvers.

Quoting witnesses, town police chief Supt. Edgardo Mendoza said one of the suspects accidentally shot himself in the waist.

The police found slugs of what looked like gun pellets, but discovered no traces of blood inside the bank. Mendoza said the suspects might have used "blank bullets."

Before fleeing towards Taytay, Rizal, the robbers also took away the mobile phones of three bank employees. The suspects escaped on board three mountain bikes, the police said.

Last week, the police killed two robbers in a shootout on Latex Road in Rodriguez, Rizal.

Before the shootout, the robbers had killed a security officer guarding the armored car of Safeguard Security, which was then collecting the earnings of a grocery store near the public market in Barangay San Jose.

Radio broadcaster found dead in rented room

By Tina Santos

A RADIO broadcaster was found dead inside his rented room in Quezon City on Sunday night, police said.

William Castro, 42, also known as "Kontak" and said to be a broadcaster of radio station dzAM, died due to multiple stab wounds in the body.

Investigation showed that Castro's body was found by his boardmate Jasper Manlapaz around 9 p.m. inside the victim's rented room at No. 641 Phase 2 Building 6, Barangay Sikatuna Bliss, Quezon City.

Manlapaz told investigators that he had just arrived from a weekend vacation when he saw bloodstains on the floor leading to Castro's room. He immediately sought the help of neighbors, who helped him forcibly open the victim's room.

The victim's body was found sprawled on the floor and bathing in a pool of blood, police said.

The Central Police District remains clueless about the motive behind the killing but an investigator said they are not discounting the robbery or work-related angle.

Fire victims get burned with fake food coupons

SEVERAL residents of Malabon City, who claimed to be recent fire victims, trooped yesterday to the office of Malabon-Navotas Rep. Ricky Sandoval to claim relief goods allegedly promised by the congressman and his wife.

But instead of getting baskets of goodies, the coupon-bearing residents went home empty-handed.

It turned out that the gift certificates they presented were not actually handed out by the couple's camp.

Sandoval and his wife, Jeannie, cried foul over the dirty tactics allegedly being waged by their political rivals that could adversely affect their chances in the coming elections.

Sandoval is seeking reelection as congressman for the Malabon-Navotas district. His wife, a political neophyte, is running for the mayor's post in Malabon City.

The fire victims said the coupons were given by unidentified persons who told them to present them at Sandoval's office in exchange for relief goods.

The victims presented the coupons bearing the photos of the Sandovals and presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. *Tina Santos*

Metro to have more drinking water soon

MORE drinking water will be available after the completion of the Balara water recovery lagoon, according to the Manila Water Company.

The backwash water recovery lagoon will be inaugurated today by Manila Water president Antonio T. Aquino and Environment Secretary Elisea G. Gozun.

"The commissioning of the new recovery lagoon will enable additional water, which normally is disposed off after being used to clean filter beds, to be impounded and utilized for drinking water. We now have the facility to maximize all the water we get and process it to drinking water," Aquino said.

Manila Water processes an average of 1,510 million liters per day (MLD) of water in several purification stages in Balara Treatment Plants.

Backwashing is done when the filter beds of the plants get too clogged with mud and other solids, the water agency added.

Drive set vs 'kotong' cops

INTERIOR and Local Government Secretary Jose Lina Jr. will meet today with different transport groups and vendors' associations to map out plans against the so-called "kotong" cops.

Lina said the cooperation of the transport workers and vendors is indispensable in the government's campaign against erring policemen and to stop corruption in the police ranks.

Lina said they have arrested 22 policemen for extortion. *Nelson Flores*

PMA should give good education

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

I'M NO admirer of Reps. Satur Ocampo, Liza Maza and Crispin Beltran of the Bayan Muna party list. But it was unfair of National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales to accuse them of funneling funds to the New People's Army through the Countrywide Development Fund, more popularly known as pork barrel.

Gonzales did not present evidence to support his serious accusation.

If he could not show proof those representatives were giving funds to the NPA, he should shut up.

* * *

A lot of people in the Macapagal-Arroyo Cabinet were surprised at the choice of Gonzales to replace Roilo Golez, who's running for congressman in Parañaque.

"Couldn't there have been a more logical choice than Gonzales?" one Cabinet official asked.

Gonzales, as presidential adviser on special concerns, was perceived to be too accommodating with Moro rebels.

* * *

Perhaps there were indeed intelligence reports that Ocampo, Maza and Beltran were supporting the NPAs.

But that's old hat because Bayan Muna is a communist front organization. So, it's just logical for them to sympathize with the NPAs since they're communists themselves.

But Gonzales is forcing the issue too far. To sympathize doesn't mean to give financial aid to the NPAs.

For how could the three channel their CDF allocations to the NPAs when they don't hold the money?

Congressmen and women can only identify projects to be funded by their CDF allocations. The holder of their funds is the Department of Budget and Management.

* * *

In her speech at the commencement exercise of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA), President Macapagal-Arroyo said the premier military school should have less Math and more subjects on communication like English.

The high attrition rate among cadets at the PMA is due to its emphasis on engineering subjects.

Because of too many Mathematics subjects, many cadets who could have become excellent officers had been "washed out" or kicked out of the academy. Still, many other bright students could have entered the PMA if only the curriculum were more "balanced" in favor of humanities.

That's why you have PMA graduates now holding key positions in the Armed Forces who can't express themselves well because they lacked communication subjects such as English.

A PMA graduate should have a well-rounded education like liberal arts graduates of ivy league schools like the University of the Philippines, Ateneo and La Salle.

The GSIS Scholarship Program

The Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) is now accepting applications from qualified incoming college students for the GSIS College Scholarship Program for SY 2004-2005.

To qualify under the program, applicants must be legitimate children of active GSIS members and must have a general academic average of 85% or its equivalent.

The following documents, together with the accomplished GSIS Scholarship Program forms, should be submitted to the GSIS Main Office or to the nearest GSIS Branch or District Offices:

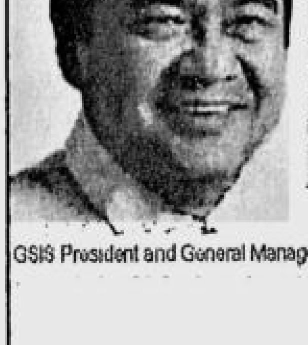
- 2 pcs. of passport size picture with signature at the back
- Certified copy of Birth Certificate
- Certified copy of 4th yr. (3rd Grading) High School Report Card
- Certified copy of their Parent's GSIS policy contract and
- Parent's Certificate of Employment

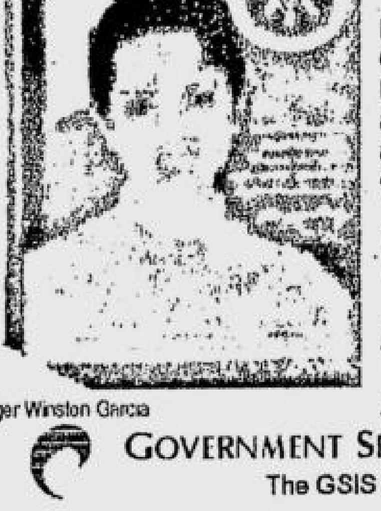
Qualifiers shall take the GSIS Competitive Examination to be administered by the Center for Educational Measurement.

Scholars can choose from among any of the following 4 or 5-yr. GSIS Priority Courses: Accountancy, Actuarial Science, Business Administration, Computer Science and related IT courses, Economics, Engineering major in Computer, Civil, Electrical & Electronics, Electronics & Communications, Industrial, Management and Mechanical only, Finance, Management, Marketing, Mass Communications, Mathematics and Statistics.

For more details, please visit the GSIS Main Office or your nearest GSIS Branch/. District Office or contact Emma, Nelda, Meljune and/or Marisa of the GSIS-HRDD Scholarship Staff at Tel. Nos. 551-1878 or 891-6161 locals 4862/4863.

Application deadline: 2 April 2004.


GSIS President and General Manager Winston Garcia



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Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

Abu Sayyaf men not in Metro, says AFP

By Alcuin Papa

THE MILITARY said yesterday the Abu Sayyaf group is not in Metro Manila even as it raised its alert status to a blue alert following the terrorist bombings in Madrid.

In a press conference yesterday in Camp Aguinaldo, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Vice Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia said the raising of the alert status was a mere "precautionary measure."

"There are no reports or information to the effect that the Abu Sayyaf are here in Metro Manila to perpetrate any terrorist activities," Garcia said.

On the other hand, the military's National Capital Region Command and the Philippine National Police's National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) "maintains blue alert merely as a preventive or a precautionary measure in the light of what happened in Madrid."

He added that the blue alert status was raised "as a matter of routine. It is always better to prevent things from happening."

Prank calls

In Makati, two prank calls warning of bomb attacks sent the Makati City police to augment security in the Central Business District yesterday.

Sr. Supt. Jovito Gutierrez, Makati police chief, said two callers warned that there was a car bomb along Makati Avenue and another bomb in a hotel on Evangelista Street.

He said his men found no bombs.

In Mandaluyong, police beefed up security measures in shopping malls and light rail transit stations within the city.

Sr. Supt. Ericson Velasquez, Mandaluyong police chief, said the public should expect a more rigorous inspection by security guards in malls and LRT stations.

In Manila, Mayor Joselito Atienza called on the public to go about their daily routine as normal as possible, despite the tight security in the city.

"There is no cause for alarm. This is just for extra precaution," Atienza said, adding city authorities do not see any real problem so far.

With reports from Margaux Ortiz, Luige del Puerto and Tarra Quismundo

Parking in front of WPD banned

MOTORISTS are now banned from parking their vehicles in front of the Western Police District headquarters along the United Nations Avenue partly because of heightened security measures following the explosions that rocked several trains in Spain last week.

WPD spokesperson Chief Insp. Gerry Agunod yesterday said the measure was enforced anew because of fears that terrorist groups would plant a car bomb in front of the said headquarters.

Aside from the parking ban, a tighter watch has also been ordered in the LRT stations in Manila, which Agunod said could be among the possible targets of terrorists. *Leila Salaverria*

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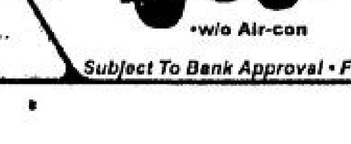

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SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA Greatest Games-Nets vs Spurs, Game 1, 2003 Finals; 8:30 a.m. (r-6 p.m.); Solar Sports—New Jersey makes its second straight Finals appearance against San Antonio.

NBA-Spurs vs Warriors; 11 a.m. (r- 8 p.m.); Solar Sports—Defending champion San Antonio travels to Northern California to take on Golden State.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

SEAG VENUES

Metro, Subic, Bacolod, Cebu in; Minda sites out

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE CENTERPIECE event of athletics is not moving out of Manila's decades-battered Rizal Memorial Track and Field Stadium after all, but boxing and some medal-rich sports will be held elsewhere as the Philippine Olympic Committee yesterday announced the venues for the 2005 Southeast Asian Games.

In essence, venues for the 23rd biennial Games will be spread out. Subic in Zambales, Bacolod and Cebu have been tapped to host at least two sports each.

Security and accessibility concerns, however, ruled out sites in Mindanao, particularly Tubod, Lanao del Norte, North Cotabato and General Santos City.

The battlegrounds were announced by the Philippine Southeast Asian Games Organizing Committee (Philsoc) which expectedly left out the venue for the opening and closing ceremonies.

"More or less, this is the final arrangement," said Red Dumuk, triathlon association secretary general and chair of Philsoc's venues management and operations. "The venues are in top condition and hassle-free."

Dumuk said that as well as athletics, the 70-year-old Rizal Memorial Sports Complex—the hub of the 1981 and 1991 SEAG—will be the venue of the swimming competitions, gymnastics (Ninoy Aquino Stadium), sepak takraw and arnis (Rizal Coliseum) and baseball (Rizal Memorial Ballpark).

Dumuk said SEAG Federation members were worried about the peace and order situation in Mindanao, forcing the Philsoc to skip the region despite strong lobbying by local government leaders.

Bacolod will stage football, weightlifting and possibly boxing, although Cebu is also trying to stage the latter.

Cebu got some events in cycling, dancesports and, tentatively, chess and billiards. Baguio, however, is also trying to host the chess events, while billiards officials are inclined to hold competitions in Metro Manila.

Sailing, triathlon, and the cycling road race will be held in Subic.

METRO/ A22

MAIN HUB: The track and field stadium at the RMSC will get another facelift.

Homegrown PBA stars want Fil-fors deported

By Philip Tubeza

HOMEGROWN stars of the Philippine Basketball Association, led by Sta. Lucia Realty's Marlou Aquino, yesterday trooped to the Department of Justice to press for the deportation of Asi Taulava and seven other Fil-foreigners.

Aquino, accompanied by 10 FedEx players and their lawyer Hilda Clave, met with acting Justice Secretary Ma. Merceditas Gutierrez to follow up the department's case against Taulava and company.

Gutierrez assured Aquino and his group that she would order the department's legal staff to expedite the review of the case.

The Senate in August 2003 ordered the Bureau of Immigration to deport Taulava and seven others for faking their citizenship documents.

Besides Talk 'N Text's Taulava, the other Fil-fors are Rudy Hatfield of Coca-Cola, John Ordonio of Alaska, Davonn Harp and Mick Pennisi of Red Bull Barako, Alex Crisano and Andy Seigle

HOMEGROWN/ A22

Marquez the merciless tough nut for Pacquiao

By Rey Danseco, *Contributor*

MANNY Pacquiao may not be afraid of WBA/IBF champion Juan Manuel Marquez, but a ring expert who had seen the merciless Mexican prizefighter in person has reason to be alarmed.

Topnotch promoter Gabriel "Bebot" Elorde Jr., who worked at the corner of Philippine featherweight champion Baby Lorona Jr., saw how Marquez put his ward away in just five minutes and five seconds at the Peppermill Hotel Casino in Reno, Nevada on April 2001.

"Lorona was knocked down twice before the referee stopped the fight," Elorde recalled in an interview yesterday.

The son of the great Gabriel "Flash" Elorde is giving Pacquiao a 50-50 chance of winning against the Mexican dual champ.

"It won't last more than six rounds," said Elorde. "Manny must avoid getting hit by Marquez's right straight—his most lethal punch."

MARQUEZ/ A22

MARQUEZ boasts an explosive right straight.

■ 76ers lose as Iverson won't come off bench

/A23

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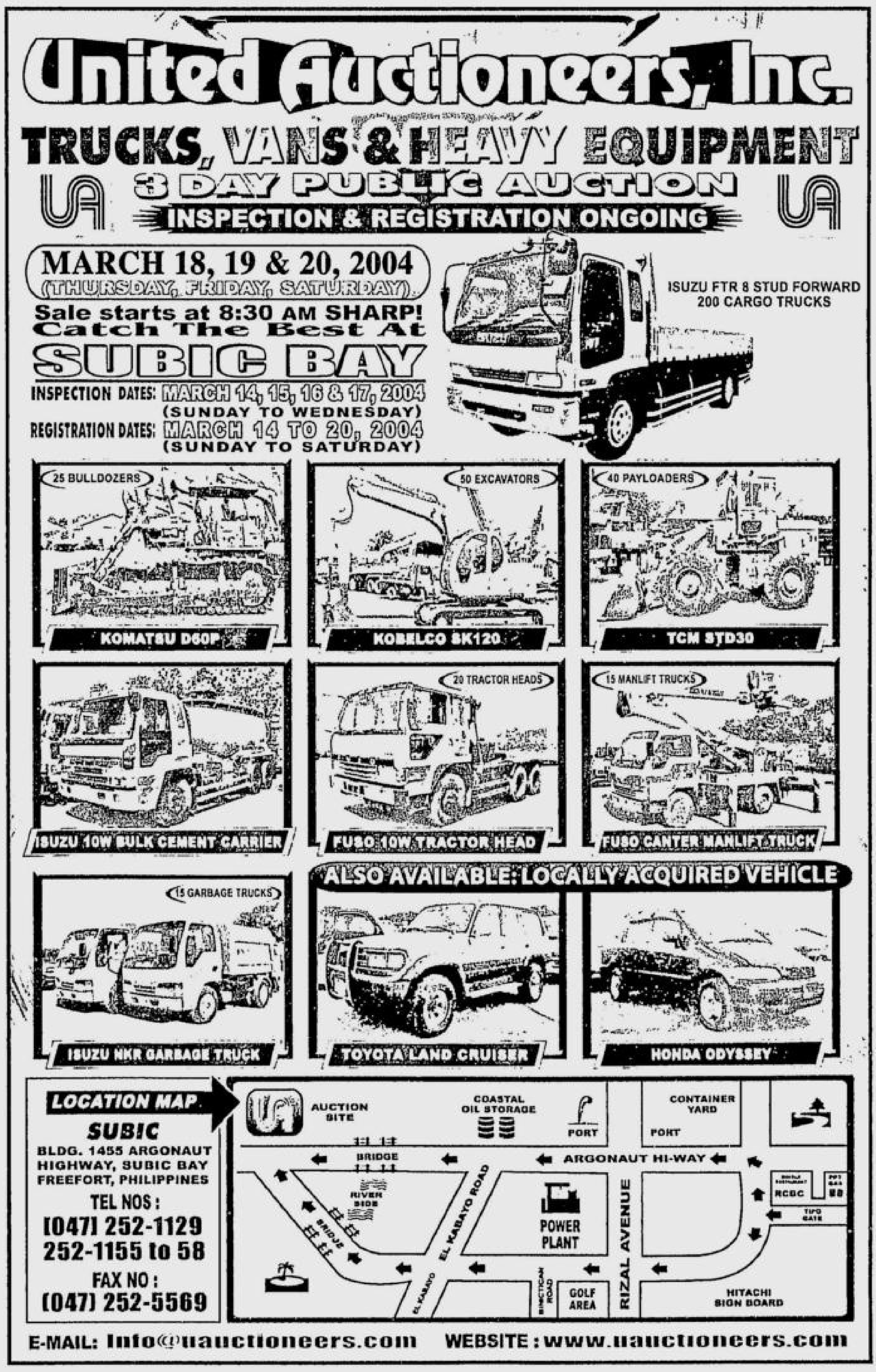

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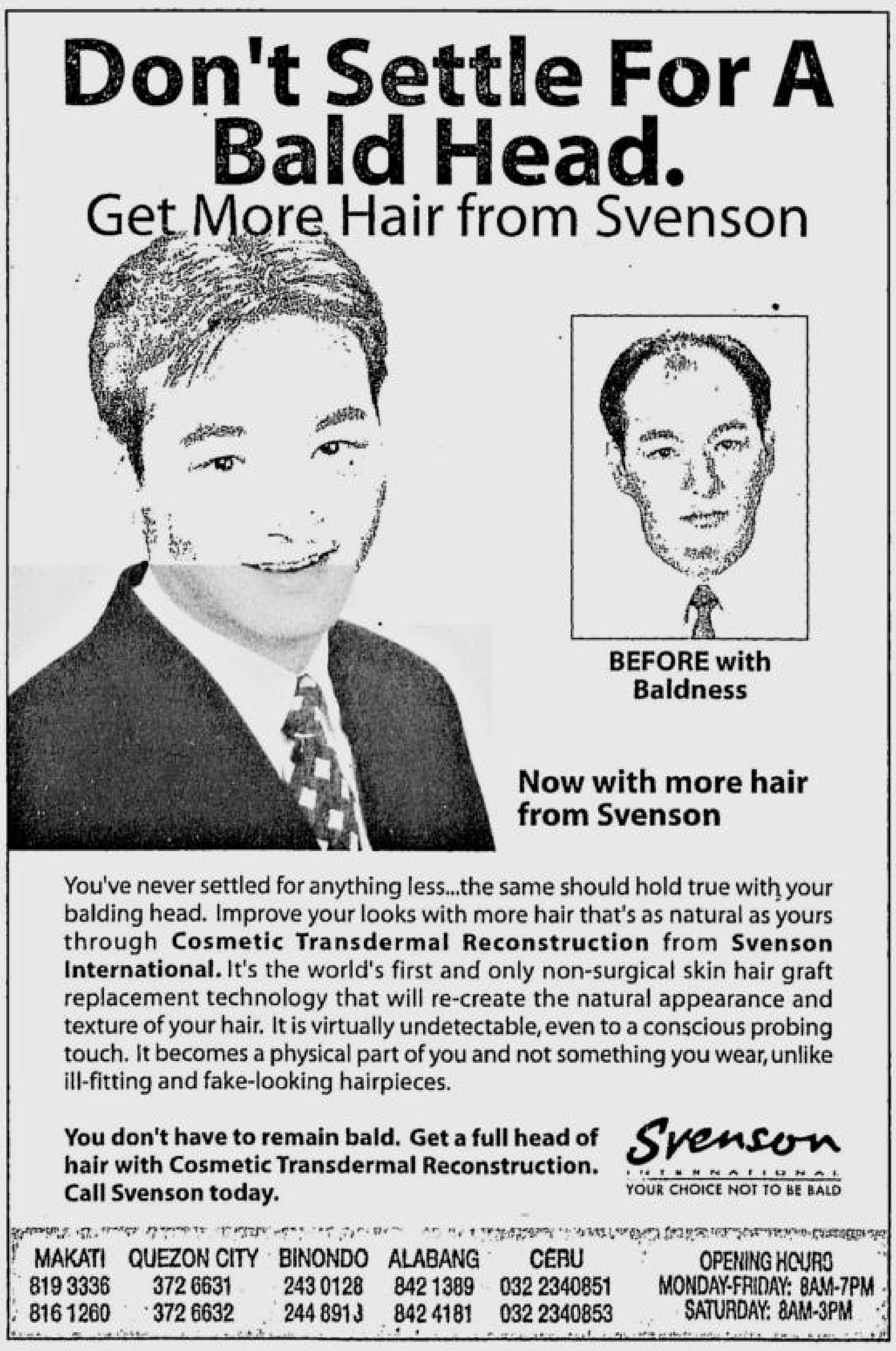

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Luzon, Visayas Games shelved; PSC bares new plan

THE PHILIPPINE Sports Commission (PSC) yesterday announced the indefinite postponement of the Luzon Games and the Visayas Games, originally slated April 24-30 in Manila and April 13-18 in Iloilo City.

PSC chair Eric Buhain said they decided to shelve the two Games on the request of some local government units and based on sentiments gathered during the Luzon and Visayas technical assemblies hosted by the PSC last month.

During those meetings, the PSC national programs secretariat heard suggestions from LGU representatives, including a popular request that the Games be postponed until after the May national elections.

"Holding the Luzon and Visayas Games after the elections will provide the LGUs more time to prepare their delegations and generate the required funding for their participation," explained Buhain.

"Some LGUs have also asked for time to reformat their sports programs, especially now that the PSC is facilitating the reorientation and integration of other grassroots programs into the Games."

The PSC plans to simultaneously stage other grassroots programs with the Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao games.

According to the PSC, the Philippine National Youth Games- Batang Pinoy (12 and under), Palarong Pambansa (13-17), and the Open (18 and above) will be integrated into the three geographical games, with the Philippine National Championships as its culminating event.

The PNC will thus showcase the country's best athletes in the different age categories.

According to PSC National Programs Secretariat head Ariel Paredes, the simultaneous staging of these programs will save the government funds which can be used to train members of the national training pool.

The plan will also simplify the logistical requirements of the Games and allow the PSC to work closer with the LGUs hosting the competitions.

Participants are broken down to 79 provinces; 115 highly urbanized, special, component, chartered and/or independent cities and four municipalities from the National Capital Region, namely: San Juan, Taguig, Pateros and Malabon.

For the Luzon Games, 38 provinces, 56 cities and four towns were entered. The Visayas Games will have 16 provinces and 32 towns participating while taking part in the Mindanao Games are 25 provinces and 27 cities, including the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao.

PBA rating up; Chua penalized

By June Navarro

PBA Commissioner Noli Eala yesterday said the league's television ratings have improved dramatically even as he slapped a heavy fine on Sta. Lucia Realty coach Alfrancis Chua for hitting a referee.

Eala said the PBA's audience share has doubled ever since ABC-5 entered the picture.

From a measly 2-percent share during Wednesdays last year, the league jacked up its ratings to 4.5 percent, with Saturdays and Sundays also experiencing a surge in fan interest.

"ABC-5 is doing everything to improve the ratings. They introduced innovations that are very simple but effective," Eala told the INQUIRER.

The Tonyboy Cojuangco-owned network dislodged the partnership of NBN-4 and IBC-13 from the PBA's television coverage after the consortium failed to honor their P200-million contract last year.

Eala also dismissed the clamor that the first game on Wednesdays be shown live.

"ABC-5 officials know what they are doing and the PBA is supporting them all the way," said Eala.

Eala said the PBA has a modest target of at least doubling its previous 4.5-percent overall audience share last year, if the league could not breach the double-figure mark.

On Chua's penalty, Eala said he had summoned the Sta. Lucia coach to his office yesterday. He declined to disclose the amount of Chua's fine for hitting the arm of referee Joey Calungcaguin.

Chua went for the ball out of frustration but accidentally hit Calungcaguin in the forearm after the referee awarded ball possession to the Purefoods TJ Hotdogs late in the game Saturday.

AQUINO (center) in action: Unfair to true Filipino players AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Homegrown . . .

From page A21

of Barangay Ginebra and Dorian Peña of San Miguel Beer.

The DOJ has not revoked the Fil-fors' citizenship.

Aquino, who acted as the group's spokesman, said it is unfair that local cagers go through a lot of hard work to be able to join the PBA, only to be bumped off by the fake Fil-fors.

Besides Aquino, the other players who went to the DOJ were John Ferriols, Boyet Ocampo, Egay Billones, Ranidel De Ocampo, Mark Pingris, Danny Capobres, Renren Ritualo, Jerome Ejercito, Mike Bravo and Omano Rodriguez.

Marquez the merciless tough nut . . .

From page A21

Elorde said that prior to the Marquez fight, Lorona, then 23 (30-15-3, with 14 knockouts), trained for a month at the Wild Card Gym in California, the same gym where Pacquiao honed his skills before Ring Magazine's current No.1 featherweight fought Marco Antonio Barrera.

"Lorona was in his best condition before the fight. Actually, Marquez seemed fazed in the first round. But after he caught our boy with that right straight, he knew he had Lorona's throat. Marquez didn't stop the punishment. He was only stopped by the referree," said Elorde.

Elorde also said Marquez, who will stake his titles against Pacquiao on May 8, is a lot quicker and throws stronger punches than Barrera.

"I am sure Marquez is more dangerous than Barrera," he said.

Marquez, toting a fearsome 42-2 win-loss slate, 33 KOs, has knocked out 11 of his last 13 foes, including former world champions Derrick Gainer, Manuel "Mantecas" Medina, Daniel Jimenez, Alfred Kotey and Julio Gervacio.

He won the International Boxing Federation 126-lb crown from Medina, who had also lost twice to Luisito Espinosa, via a seventh round stoppage in February 2003 and annexed the World Boxing Association belt on All Saints Day last year by pummeling Gainer to submission, also in the seventh canto.

MINTON TEAM
ONE
IT!

BREAKTHROUGH BABES

MEMBERS and team officials of the Ateneo-Yonex ladies badminton team show off their trophy after beating La Salle to rule the UAAP tournament at the Rizal Memorial Courts. It was Ateneo's first UAAP ladies team title. From left, UAAP president and Ateneo athletic director Junjun Capistrano, Marianne Sy, Leslie Co Kehyeng, Aldellyn Po, Aurora Co, Joan Javier, Irene Chiu, Andrea Go and Ateneo Alumni Booster Babes Oreta. Kneeling are coaches Kennie Asuncion and Alma Ledesma.

Metro, Subic...

From page A21

Tennis, in case it makes the final roster of events, will also be held in Subic, according to Dumuk.

Fencing and wushu will be played at the GSIS Hall in Pasay City, taekwondo at the Folk Arts Theater, basketball at the Philsports, and rowing, canoeing and traditional boat races at the La Mesa Dam in Quezon City.

Other venues tapped are Merville, Parañaque (petanque), Fort Bonifacio (shooting), Cavite, (Southwoods for archery, Carmona for equestrian and Riviera for golf), Cuneta Astrodome (karatedo), Rosario, Pasig (softball) and Makati Coliseum (table tennis).

The venue issue earlier spurred controversies between the POC on one hand and the Philippine Sports Commission and the City of Manila on the other, which complained of the Olympic body's belated announcement of the sites.

SPORTSWATCH

SM malls venue of PBA summer tour

THE PHILIPPINE Basketball Association has lined up a wide range of sports activities this summer, including a novel project where kids and the youth will be given a chance to interact with their PBA idols. Picked as venue is the SM supermalls, where the PBA will put up two interactive event areas weekly at designated SM branches for the next three months. These areas will be graced and visited by PBA players or teams. Activities include touring displays such as hand and shoe prints, photo gallery, inflatable basketball hoop, PBA snap shots, Molten basketball museum, a half-court area and a PBA merchandise booth. The event, presented by JVC and Globe Telecom and sponsored by the PBA, Toby's, Purefoods, Accel, Air 21, Molten and Mail & More, will be launched in grand rites starting at 5 p.m. on Friday at the SM Megamall.

And 1 signs Williams as endorser

AND 1 has signed Memphis Grizzlies Jason Williams to an endorsement contract, according to Seth Berger, chief executive officer of the basketball and apparel company. "There are certain players in the league who have both the AND 1 game and the AND 1 swagger. Jason is one of those players," said Berger yesterday. "Both his game and his attitude reflect the brand. With Jason on board the brand will continue to grow toward its goal of becoming the No. 1 basketball brand in the world." Williams, a 6-foot-1 guard, was drafted in 1999 by the Sacramento Kings in the first round. In 2000, he was traded to the Grizzlies where he averaged 12.1 points per game last year.

Softbelles Summer Camp slated

THE SOFTBELLES Summer Camp 2004 will be held March 22 to May 7 at the Rosario Sports Arena in Pasig City. Open to girls ages 8 to 18, the camp aims to teach the basic skills and strategies in softball. The 15-session camp finishes with a three-day tournament. Registration is open at the following Airfreight 2100/FedEx World Service Center outlets: Robinsons Galleria, SM Megamall, North Edsa, Park Square, Fairview, Alabang Town Center and Festival Mall, Alabang. For inquiries, call or text 09177545242 or 09179815868 or check out the Softbelles website at www.softbelles.org or e-mail home@softbelles. org.

NCA 7-cock derby today at Araneta

A BIG crowd is expected at the air-conditioned Araneta Coliseum when the "National Cockers Association (NCA) 7-Cock Derby" gets underway at 5 p.m. today. More than 50 tough matches are slated in today's elimination round. Hosts are Louie Cua of Manila and the NYS Group. Araneta Coliseum's new schedule of derbies is now every Tuesday and Thursday. For inquiries, contact 911-3101 and 911-2928 (look for Gloria Avena). The NCA 7-cock derby held on March 1 and 3 was won by long-shot bet Ucap president Raymond Velayo after his entry Arnis Master 8-8 posted 6.5 points. Another 7-Cock Derby is scheduled on March 23 and 25 with Gov. Ito Ynares and Gerry Ramos as promoters.

MPC hosts archery summer classes

THE NATIONAL Archery Association and Manila Polo Club join hands in holding archery summer classes on April 12 to May 27 at the MPC field in Makati City. Veteran coach Henry Manalang and national archers Jennifer Chan and Joann Chan-Tabanag are among those who will conduct lessons for boys and girls aged 5 to 10 and adults, too. NAAP president Dr. Leonora Fe S. Brawner and general secretary-treasurer Ligaya P. Manalang recently signed an agreement with MPC sports and games manager Sonny Orallo for the staging of the archery classes.

Slasher Cup ng Masa March 24

COCKERS and breeders from all over the country are competing in Roligon Mega Cockpit's "Slasher Cup ng Masa 6-Cock Derby" on March 24, 26, 29 and 31. Entries from Masbate, Bicol, Palawan, Negros Occidental, Iloilo, Davao, Cebu, Zambales, Pangasinan, Ilocos, Pampanga, Laguna, Rizal, Batangas and Cavite have confirmed their participation in the event offering a guaranteed prize of P1.5 million for an entry of P8,800. Derby host is tabloid executive Rey Briones, who will be supported by Roligon owner Rolly Ligon. Submission of weights is on March 23 from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. For details, call 833-2275, 833-1638, 852-9774 and 852-9812 (look for Aubrey, Shirley or Tiling).

Fiest
nfere

PBA PARTNER

Gran Matador, a new drink launched last June, is the title sponsor of the 2004 PBA Fiesta Conference. Shown during the contract signing are PBA Commissioner Noli Eala (left), PBA chair Buddy Encarnado and Gran Matador marketing manager Ramon Reyes.

The Wright stuff

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

I WATCHED the fight between Winky Wright and Shane Mosley on Sunday on IBC 13 TV through Solar Sports.

It was not exactly a memorable fight.

No knockdowns.

No knockouts.

No ear-biting even.

Still, I enjoyed it, if only because Winky Wright proved that Shane Mosley wasn't exactly the great boxer that our so-called experts had been trying to picture him all these years.

Mosley is quick. Brainy even.

But no. I don't buy the idea that he is a great fighter.

Before he fought Winky Wright, Shane Mosley had tasted two defeats in 41 fights—both at the hands of Vernon Forrest.

In my book, though, Shane Mosley had lost thrice. The third one was against Oscar De La Hoya only a while back.

And then on Sunday, Shane Mosley absorbed his fourth setback—his third officially as the records would tell us.

Winky Wright had beaten him so convincingly I could not understand why he would not accept defeat graciously.

"I don't know what happened to me out there," said Mosley after the fight. "It seemed like I was dehydrated from the start."

Great fighters make no alibis.

Like chess grandmasters who voluntarily resign when they know the futility of resistance, great fighters know when they've been beaten or not.

Great fighters retreat when it's time to retreat. Remember Roberto Duran's famed "No mas! No mas! (No more! No more!)"? He said that when he knew he had no more to give in the eighth round of his fight against Sugar Ray Leonard in the Eighties.

If you lose, you lose.

If you win, you win.

Shane Mosley had lost it by the sixth round. The fight that unified the 154-pound crown was Wright's right from the opening bell.

Unleashing stinging jabs the way a woodpecker would to a tree trunk right from the start, Wright the lefty never gave Mosley a chance to mount a decent offense.

Always on the offensive, Wright backed Mosley for virtually 12 rounds with jabs and jarring left shots that even with two rounds left, the crowd had no doubt as to who'd be the winner.

The three judges scored it 116-112, 117-111 and 117-113—all in favor of the 32-year-old Wright, a native of Florida who, until Sunday's fight with Mosley, was a virtual nobody simply because he had never fought a marquee fighter before.

I scored it 117-112 for Wright, with the 12th and last round as Mosley's biggest—although harmless already—round of the night. Harmless because even though, at one point, Mosley was landing seemingly hard shots to the face, Wright didn't show any sign of weakness. Even exhaustion. He was merely coasting along. Twice, during a clinch, Wright looked at his corner ostensibly to seek advice while under attack; with two winks—or what appeared as winks—he assured his handlers that he still had the energy to take what was left of Mosley's most lethal artillery.

In my scorecard, the only rounds that went to Mosley were 5, 7 and 12. And they weren't even convincing wins.

When the final bell rang, Wright knew he won it. He raised his hands in celebration of his 47th victory in 50 fights, then he embraced Mosley.

The setback was a big blow for Mosley, whose much-publicized, multimillion dollar fight with Felix Trinidad, who was at ringside, in July had seemed to vanish in the air.

If I were Don King, I'd replace Mosley with Wright. I guess you will agree with me that a Wright-Trinidad fight would draw the same impact as would a Mosley-Trinidad duel.

It's about time Wright, who earned just $750,000 to Mosley's $2.1 million, gets the right stuff from hereon.

***

FASTBREAK. The Dynasouls will surely pack them in again tonight at Merk's Place in Greenbelt 3, Makati City. That's because of all the bands specializing in Beatles stuff this side of the globe the last 30 years or so, The Dynasouls are the best—next to my group, that is (*ahem!*). Trouble is, my band isn't around anymore; two of my members now live in the US *kasi*. But if we get lucky, though, Danny Isla, Vernon Sarne, Caloy Rufo and myself may yet form a replica of my old band. Early suggestions for the band's name include such Beatles hits like "Boys," "Wait," "Girl" and "Help." You will notice that all are four-letter words. That's because four superb musicians had composed The Beatles—John, Paul, George & Ringo. OK, there's another suggested name for our group: The Pub Four. What do you think, my dear King Richard M?

Lin subdues Gade in final

LIN lies on the court as he celebrates his win over Gade. AFP

BIRMINGHAM, England—China's Lin Dan won the All England badminton title on Sunday for the first time, beating 1999 champion Peter Gade of Denmark, 9-15, 15-5, 15-8, in a high-class final.

It was another triumph for China but there was controversy later in the women's doubles where one of the Chinese players pulled out with an injury for the second week running against the same opponents.

Lin, 20, the top seed and world number one, struggled to find a rhythm early on but powered through the second set and then led 14-3 in the decider as Gade battled to keep pace.

The Dane managed to stave off one match point and then staged a mini-rally but Lin finished it off in 77 minutes with a trademark cross-court smash.

Gade, 27, approaching his best after a serious knee injury kept him out of the sport for over a year, was far from disgraced and both men look to be serious medal contenders in August's Olympics in Athens.

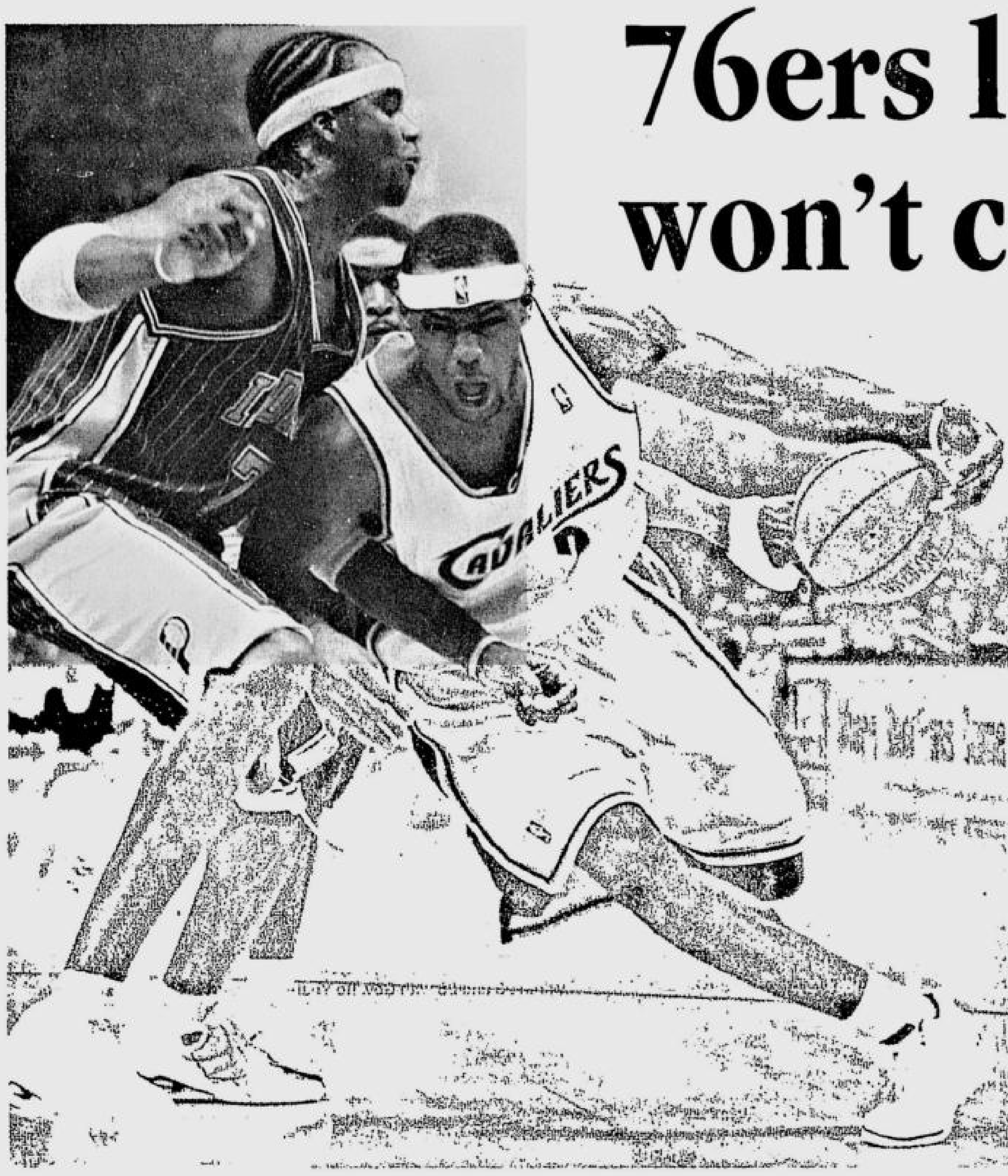
A sellout crowd of 4,500 thrilled to the tussle but were disappointed to learn the women's doubles later in the day would be a walkover.

In an all-Chinese final, top seeds Yang Wei and Zhang Jiewen were due to meet titleholders Gao Ling and Huang Sui but Zhang pulled out with a hamstring injury.

It was the third time Gao and Huang had benefited from the same opponents in such a way in a major final in the last six months, most recently a week ago in the Swiss Open where Zhang withdrew with the same injury.

The women's singles title went to former world champion Gong Ruina, who beat defending champion Zhou Mi, 11-7, 11-7. It was the seventh time in the last eight years the final had been an all-Chinese affair.

Reuters



CLEVELAND Cavaliers guard LeBron James (right) drives around Indiana Pacers forward Jermaine O'Neal. AP

76ers lose as Iverson won't come off bench

AUBURN HILLS, Michigan—Allen Iverson said he was ready to play in Sunday's 85-69 loss to the Detroit Pistons but changed his mind after 76ers coach Chris Ford told him he'd come off the bench.

"I'm a starter. I've been a starter here for eight years. I'm not a sixth man," Iverson said after the game. "I'm a starter. I know in this league ... if someone comes back from an injury, if he's a starter he starts. What's the difference? If you're going to cut my time down, cut my time down. It doesn't make any difference. I'm a starter."

Iverson has been hampered by a swollen right knee, which caused him to miss three straight games before Sunday. The league's second-leading scorer participated in the shootaround before the game but was on the Sixers' bench in street clothes at tip-off.

After the game, he said he "was already taped and everything and had my uniform on. I had to take it back off, so that was rough."

"I feel real disappointed because I told the trainers I was going to play," Iverson said. "He (Ford) said I hadn't run up and down the court, and he wasn't sure about my conditioning."

Ford and Iverson have had a rocky relationship since the coach replaced the fired Randy Ayers on Feb. 9.

In Toronto, Jalen Rose scored 23 points in his first game in over a month to help the Toronto Raptors beat the Atlanta Hawks, 101-84.

Rose missed 16 games with four broken bones in his left hand. He had not played since undergoing surgery Feb. 10.

IVERSON: I'm not a sixth man.

In Cleveland, LeBron James scored 26 points and forced Ron Artest to take a tough 3-pointer as the final horn sounded, leading the Cleveland Cavaliers over the Indiana Pacers, 107-104.

Zydrunas Ilgauskas made two free throws with 36 seconds left and forced a big turnover seconds later for the Cavs, who improved to 10-3 since the All-Star break.

Meanwhile, the University of Kentucky will hold the overall number one seed in the NCAA Tournament after the selection brackets were announced Sunday evening.

The NCAA selection committee also gave number one seeds to Duke, Stanford and Saint Joseph's in the four regional brackets for the men's college basketball tournament known as "March Madness" that gets underway with a play-in game Tuesday.

Complete results: Sacramento 101, San Antonio 87; Cleveland 107, Indiana 104; Toronto 101, Atlanta 84; Detroit 85, Philadelphia 69; Portland 92, Minnesota 83; New York 103, Milwaukee 100; Miami 104, New Jersey 95; Dallas 101, LA Clippers 88; Denver 102, Utah 75.

AP

Aguilar dominates 'moto' 3rd leg rivals

GLENN "The Rocket" Aguilar walloped the field the way an FIM Asian champion should in the third leg of the Philippine National Motocross Championships at Brooke's Point in Palawan Sunday.

The 27-year-old Revtex team captain dominated both the pro open and 125 categories in sizzling fashion to stay sharp going into the second leg of the FIM Asian Supercross Championship to be held in Puerto Princesa on March 28.

In the Pro 125, Aguilar, the seven-time National Rider of the Year, trailed only after the first lap. He overtook his rivals in the second for a huge 15-second victory over eventual second placer Popeye Rubi. Jovie Saulog emerged third while another Revtex bet, Jerry Beech, placed fourth.

Aguilar was even more dominant in the premier pro open, where he stole the lead from Rubi even before the first lap ended, and led all the way for another smashing triumph before 30,000 Palaweños.

While not crushing his rivals, Aguilar also provided the inspiration to five other Caltex victories that once again proved Revtex's status as the country's best motocross team in this event sanctioned by the National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association.

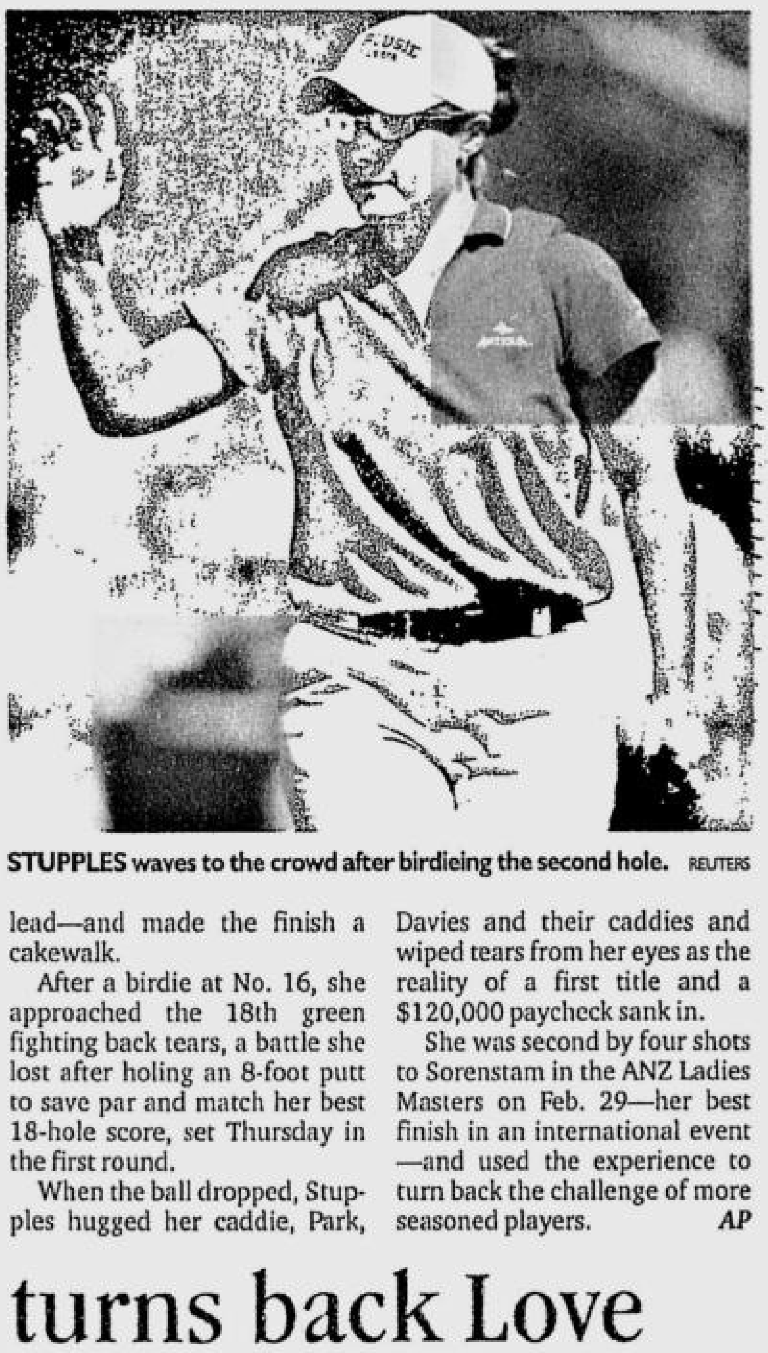
Other Revtex winners in the third leg were Alvin Beech in the expert class, Joey Barnedo in the Beginner's Class and Wonder Boy Kenneth San Andres in the Novice Open and 125 categories. Even Revtex's youth riders joined in the domination, with Jensen Manuel and Jerrick Mitra finishing 1-2 in the Junior category.

"This only goes to show that Revtex is the undisputed motocross master in the Philippines," said Revtex team manager Ner Marquez Dormiendo. "With Glenn providing the leadership and motivation, everybody is simply stepping up. Caltex is really proud of this team."

Aguilar, who is also sponsored by Sidi Boots, Renthal, Oakley, HJC Helmets, Sukida Motorcycles and Pro Grip, is staying in Palawan until the end of the month to familiarize himself with the race course in Puerto Princesa.

"This is an added advantage on our part being the host so I have to grab this opportunity," said Aguilar, who finished a fighting second in the FIM Series' first leg in Bali, Indonesia.

Stupples sets mark, wins by 5



STUPPLES waves to the crowd after birdieing the second hole. REUTERS

TUCSON, Arizona—Karen Stupples had a breakthrough week at Randolph Park, shooting the best 72-hole score in LPGA Tour history to win her first tour title.

The 30-year-old Englishwoman broke the tour record for raw score Sunday, closing with a 7-under 63 to finish the Welch's-Fry's Championship at 22-under 258. She beat Grace Park and Jung Yeon Lee by five strokes in the season-opening tournament.

Wendy Doolan set the previous record (259) last year, the first time for the tournament was played on the 6,176-yard Dell Urich layout. Annika Sorenstam's 261 in 2001 at Moon Valley in Phoenix is the tour's best for a par-72 course.

Stupples, who had never finished higher than a tie for third in five previous seasons on the tour, eagled the 13th hole to pull away from her nearest rivals.

Park, sixth, third and fourth in Tucson the last three years, turned in a 67, but bogeyed the last hole to drop into a tie with Lee (66) at 263.

Stacy Prammanasudh finished seven shots back after a 67, and Laura Davies, who began the round tied with Park one shot behind Stupples, carded a 71 to land in a tie with Shi Hyun Ahn (63) and Aree Song (67) at 267.

Stupples' 30-foot eagle putt on No. 13 got her to 21 under—good for a three-stroke lead—and made the finish a cakewalk.

After a birdie at No. 16, she approached the 18th green fighting back tears, a battle she lost after holing an 8-foot putt to save par and match her best 18-hole score, set Thursday in the first round.

When the ball dropped, Stupples hugged her caddie, Park, Davies and their caddies and wiped tears from her eyes as the reality of a first title and a $120,000 paycheck sank in.

She was second by four shots to Sorenstam in the ANZ Ladies Masters on Feb. 29—her best finish in an international event—and used the experience to turn back the challenge of more seasoned players.

AP

Federer, Roddick triumph

RODDICK

INDIAN WELLS, California—Top-ranked Roger Federer of Switzerland and No. 3 Andy Roddick of the United States breezed through their opening matches in the Pacific Life Open on a sweltering day in the desert.

Federer, last year's Wimbledon winner and the Australian Open champion this year, began play Sunday with a methodical 6-1, 6-1 victory over Andrei Pavel of Romania.

On a roll to begin the year, Federer extended his 2004 match record to 17-1.

Roddick, the reigning US Open champion, downed countryman Jan-Michael Gambill, 7-6 (3), 6-2, as afternoon temperatures reached 39 degrees C (102 degrees F).

On the women's side, Lindsay Davenport of the United States beat Samantha Stosur of Australia, 6-0, 6-3, in a third-round match.

Federer, coming off a win at Dubai, was extremely accurate with his powerful forehand against Pavel, ripping 16 winners.

Federer upped his record against the Romanian to 6-0, including a win at Dubai and three other victories over him already this year.

Federer said it can be difficult to play the same opponent so often.

"You always feel like now he has had time to figure you out better," he said.

AP

Hamilton turns back Love

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Florida—Todd Hamilton birdied his final two holes Saturday, stuffing an 8-iron into 4 feet on No. 18, to close with a 2-over 74 and defeat Davis Love III by one shot at the Honda Classic.

"This is a dream come true," Hamilton said. "There's probably a lot of other golfers who deserve it more talent-wise, but I guarantee you no one will appreciate it more than I will."

Hamilton, who finished at 12-under 274, earned $900,000 and a two-year exemption on tour.

The perks don't stop there. The 38-year-old tour rookie should easily move into the top 50 in the world ranking and qualify for the Masters.

Not bad for a guy who was living in obscurity on the Japanese tour last year, despite winning four times, and who spent the last 12 years toiling in the Far East.

"I struggled today for a long time and then, lo and behold, I found a couple of birdies at the end," Hamilton said. "I don't know how I did it."

Hamilton has struggled longer than that. Eight times he tried to get his tour card through qualifying school until he finally made it last year. He is only one year young than Love, who was trying to win for the 19th time.

AP

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8 HIDALGO
9 TORQUE
10 LANGIT MO, KALIGAYAHAN KO

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1 MILAN
2 ANNIE B
3 BONE SNATCHER
4 HIDALGO
5 GOTHIKA
6 TORQUE
7 THE GRUDGE 2
8 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
9 LOVE ACTUALLY
10 CARMEN
11 LANGIT MO, KALIGAYAHAN KO
12 HAUNTED MANSION

SM CITY MARILAO

1 DUPLEX
2 IN THE CUT
3 ANNIE B
4 GOTHIKA

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1 21 GRAMS
2 RESERVED
3 ANNIE B
4 TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
5 SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE
6 COLD MOUNTAIN
7 RESERVED
8 WISHING STAIRS

SM MEGAMALL
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1 SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE
RESERVE-A-SEAT dial 6366800
2 LOVE ACTUALLY
3 GOTHIKA
4 THE GRUDGE 2
5 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
6 TORQUE
7 CARMEN
8 DUPLEX
9 MILAN
10 HIDALGO
11 COLD MOUNTAIN
12 LANGIT MO, KALIGAYAHAN KO

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1 HIDALGO
2 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
3 LANGIT MO, KALIGAYAHAN KO
4 ANNIE B.

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1 TORQUE
2 LOVE ACTUALLY
3 COLD MOUNTAIN
4 HIDALGO
5 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
6 GOTHIKA
7 LANGIT MO, KALIGAYAHAN KO
8 DUPLEX
9 THE GRUDGE 2
10 CARMEN
11 BONE SNATCHER
12 MILAN

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998

1 COLD MOUNTAIN
2 BONE SNATCHER
3 ANNIE B
4 WISHING STAIRS
5 LOST IN TRANSLATION
6 SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1 GOTHIKA
2 WATER DEMON
3 SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE
4 U-BELT
5 BONE SNATCHER
6 ANNIE B

SM CITY LUCENA
(042) 7108977-80

1 COLD MOUNTAIN
2 A TALE OF TWO SISTERS
3 WATER DEMON
4 ANNIE B

THE PODIUM CINEMA

1 HIDALGO
11:55 MF/12:25
MF/3:00/5:35/8:10/
10:25 LFS/10:45
LMF/1:00 END

2 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
11:50 FS/12:20
MF/2:25/4:30/6:35/8:40/
10:20 LFS/10:45
LMF/12:25 END

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G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB1 GREENBELT 1	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER
1 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	1 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	ArtFilm 1 THE GRUDGE 2 1:10, 3:10, 5:10, 7:10, 9:10	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 1 GOTHIKA 1:30, 3:30	THX 1 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
2 HIDALGO	2 LOVE ACTUALLY	2 HIDALGO 1:45, 4:20, 6:55, 9:30	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 2 LOVE ACTUALLY 12:15, 3:00, 5:45, 8:30, 11:15	2 HIDALGO
3 THE GRUDGE 2	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 3 HIDALGO 12:10, 2:45, 5:20, 7:55, 10:30	Onstage REPERTORY'S DRACULA Mar. 19, 20, 21, 26, 27 & 28	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 HIDALGO 1:00, 3:35, 6:10, 8:45, 11:20	3 LOVE ACTUALLY
4 CARMEN	4 DUPLEX		4 SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE 2:15, 5:00, 7:45, 10:30	4 THE GRUDGE 2
	5 TORQUE		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 12:50, 2:50, 5:00, 7:10, 9:20, 11:30	5 GOTHIKA
	6 THE GRUDGE 2			
	7 GOTHIKA			

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Or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.

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(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS) GRUDGE-2
2 (SDDS) SEABISCUIT
3 (DTS) TORQUE
4 GOLD (DTS) CHEPER BY THE DOZEN
5 GOLD (DOLBY) HIDALGO
6 GOLD (SDDS) GOTHIKA
7 GOLD (DOLBY) LOVE ACTUALLY
8 (PRIME) DUPLEX
9 (PRIME) SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE
10 (PRIME) MILAN

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
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E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City)
tel 687.6963 or 72

1 (DOLBY) HIDALGO
2 (DOLBY) CHEPER BY THE DOZEN
3 (DOLBY) LOVE ACTUALLY
4 (DOLBY) GOTHIKA

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290, 833.3274

1 LANGIT KO KALIGAYAHAN KO
2 DRAGON VS. NINJA
3 GRUDGE-1

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986

1 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
2 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
3 CHEPER BY THE DOZEN
TORQUE
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) LANGIT KO KALIGAYAHAN KO
5

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285

1 CARMEN
2 LANGIT KO KALIGAYAHAN KO
3 GOTHIKA
4 TORQUE
5 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
6 CHEPER BY THE DOZEN

M star
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(Las Pinas)
tel 873.5004

1 WATER DEMON
2 EMPERORS CLUB

PREMIERE CINEMA
(Makati City) tel 892.2503
THX

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1 ANNIE B.
2 CHASING LIBERTY

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1 PIRANHA
2 THALIA
3
4

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

5 RESERVE
6
7 (DTS)
8 (SDDS)
9 (DOLBY)

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1 SPIRAL
2 CHEAPERS BY THE DOZEN
3 LANGIT KO KALIGAYAHAN KO
4 (SDDS) DRAGON VS. NINJA
5 HIDALGO
6 (DOLBY) TORQUE
7 (DTS) GOTHIKA
8 U BELT
9 ANNIE B.

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 RESERVE
2 (SDDS)
3 (DTS)
4 (DOLBY)
5

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1 RUSH HOURS
2 KISKISAN
3 (DTS) DRAGON VS. NINJA
4 LANGIT KO KALIGAYAHAN KO
5 (SDDS) LOVE ACTUALLY

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1 RESERVE

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson LANGIT KO KALIGAYAHAN KO
Lords LANGIT KO KALIGAYAHAN KO

MARKETMALL Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1 HIDALGO
2 TORQUE
3 LANGIT KO KALIGAYAHAN KO
4 GRUDGE-2

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY) TORQUE
2 CHEAPERS BY THE DOZEN
3 LOVE ACTUALLY
4 HIDALGO
5 LANGIT KO KALIGAYAHAN KO

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1 LANGIT KO KALIGAYAHAAN KO
2 DRAGON VS NINJA

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta Center
Ali MALL CINEPLEX 7
Tel No. 911-3101 Loc. 821-8242-8400

1 CLOSED
2 CLOSED
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL) HIDALGO
4 (SDDS) GOTHIKA
5 (DTS) TORQUE
6 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
7 LOVE ACTUALLY

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX) WATER DEMON
2 GHOST HOUSE
3 (DTS ES) SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE
4 U BELT

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121

1 SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE
2 ANNIE B
3 (DOLBY) GOTHIKA
4 (DTS) MAGIC KITCHEEN

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489

1 ANNIE B
2 RUN AWAY JURY
3 (DOLBY) GHOST HOUSE
4 (DTS) SHIRI

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa, Laguna) tel (049) 837.0926

1 TORQUE
2 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
3 (DTS) ANNIE B

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
2 (DTS) SPIRAL
3 (DOLBY) TORQUE
4 ANNIE B

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1 ANNIE B
2 (DOLBY) GOTHIKA
3 (DTS) TORQUE
4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1 HAUNTED MANSION
2 ANNIE B
3 (DOLBY) JEEPER CREEPERS

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1 ANNIE B
2 DUPLEX
3 (DOLBY) COLD MOUNTAIN
4 (DTS) RUN AWAY JURY

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795-3320

1 COLD MOUNTAIN
2 DUPLEX
3 ANNIE B

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS) DRAGON VS. NINJA
2 MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
3 BIGLANG LIKO
4 (DTS) WISHER

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY) DRAGON VS. NINJA
2 U BELT
3 (DTS) TORQUE
4 CHEPER BY THE DOZEN
5 SPIRAL

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1 CHEPER BY THE DOZEN
2 ALYAS BOMBA QUEEN

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558

1 CHEPER BY THE DOZEN
2 TORQUE
3 GRUDGE-1

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1 TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
2 KUYA
3 (DTS) RUN AWAY JURY
4 (DOLBY) COLD MOUNTAIN

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel 520.8914

1 (DTS) RESERVE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1 WATER DEMON
2 GHOTIKA
3 TORQUE
4 ANNIE B

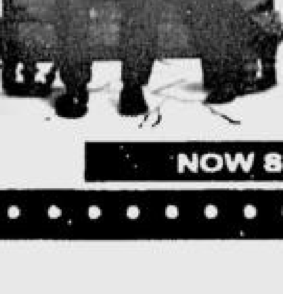
Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1 BUGBUG SARADO
2 DRAGON VS. NINJA

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY dts SDDS

FESTIVAL CINEMA
Level 4
Festival Supermall
Filinvest - Alabang
Tel. 85035-71 to 72
Schedule subject to change without prior notice



Honesty . . .

From page A26

mouth. He also went out of his way to find out why Randy Santiago wears shades all the time. He does his research by frequenting hotel lobbies and *kapihan* conferences where political figures usually gather.

"That way, you can understand your subjects better and you get to portray them better. *Mas* closer to reality," he says.

For a man who takes great pains to be honest and credible in doing his craft even when his job actually requires him to be bogus, Willie Nepomuceno might as well run for president himself.

Inadequate showcase

From page A28

Vanness Wu in concert

VANNESS Wu and **Pops Fernandez** perform in a back-to-back concert at Expo Filipino, Clark Field, Pampanga on March 26. On March 27, the show moves over to the Araneta Coliseum, and on March 29, it will be staged at the Abellana Sports Complex in Cebu City. Guests include **Drew Arellano, Mark Herras, Yasmien Kurdi, Marinel Santos** and Erik Santos. Call 891-9999.

Animal Planet's "Wolves at Our Door" is a documentary about the experiences of **Jim** and **Jamie Dutcher**, who spent six years living with and filming a pack of wolves on Idaho's Sawtooth Mountains. The one-hour program will be telecast at 10 p.m. on March 22.

UST Jazz Band

THE UST Jazz Band will perform at the Francisco Santiago Hall of Equitable PCI Bank on Makati Avenue at 7:30 p.m. on March 19. The 2004 MCO Arts Festival presentation features conductor **Rodger Llado.** Call the MCO secretariat at 878-4358.

'Talking Lives'

D.J. **Caruso**'s "Talking Lives" is a psychological thriller that pits an expert FBI profiler (**Angelina Jolie**) against a devilishly brilliant serial killer.

The film explores deeper and often surprising elements of personality and motive, making the production not so much the standard whodunit as a why-dunnit.

Jolie's character solves the complex case only after figuring out the reasons for the mysterious killer's behavior, understanding his bizarre point of view, and then discovering who he really is.

Groom . . .

From page A28

But inside the venue, there were photographers with the ABS-CBN IDs who freely took photos.

INQUIRER photographer Jim Guiao Punzalan had to be ushered into the venue by a staff member of ABS-CBN because according to one of Jules' aides, only the network had access to the wedding.

On Friday, the rest of the world would have that access, as the wedding of the year is aired and Reality TV takes over.

With Nini Valera

American Idol albums now out

THE AMERCIAN idol fever is at an all-time high once again.

The show that inspired other reality-based singing competitions in the country has become the talk of the town. As the anticipation continues on who will be the next American Idol, those who have conquered the American TV screens and the rest of the world with their victory in the show are now immortalized on CD albums from BMG Records.

Kelly Clarkson, a waitress from Texas, became a household name when her soulful voice captured the hearts and millions of audiences who voted for her to be the American Idol in September 2002.

From then on, Clarkson has sold over a million copies in America alone with her debut album "Thankful," which produced two No. 1 singles, "A Moment Like This" and "Miss Independent."

The following year, Ruben Studdard made waves when he became the next American Idol. His album "Soulful" showcases the soul in his voice with songs like "Sorry 2004" and "Flying Without Wings," his cover of Westlife's hit.

Though he lost the title to Suddard, Clay Aiken has walked away with a recording contract. He has since recorded his debut album "Measure of a Man," featuring the chart topper "Invinsible."

All albums are released by BMG Records Pilipinas and are available on CDs and cassettes in record bars.

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
For inquiries, call:
687-6963 • 687-6972
RESERVED SEATING
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

1	HIDALGO	11:40, 2:30, 5:20 8:10, 11:00	PG-13
2	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	11:00, 1:10, 3:20 5:30, 7:40, 9:50	GP
3	LOVE ACTUALLY	11:40, 2:30, 5:20 8:10, 11:00	R-18
4	GOTHIKA	11:15, 1:30, 3:50 6:10, 8:30, 10:50	R-13

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CINEMA 1	HIDALGO	11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00	P13
CINEMA 2	LOVE ACTUALLY	11:05, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 10:00	R18

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.
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MUSIC MUSEUM

MAR. 19,20,26,27	"MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL"	8:00PM
MAR 17 & 18	"WILLIE NEP 4 PRESIDENT"	9:00PM

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Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

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Ali 4	GOTHIKA
Ali 5	TORQUE
Ali 6	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
Ali 7	LOVE ACTUALLY

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MAR 17	PBA: STA. LUCIA VS. TALK 'N' TEXT
MAR 18	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
MAR 21	PBA: SAN MIGUEL VS. PUREFOODS
MAR 23	NCA7-COCK DERBY
MAR 24	PBA: GINEBRA VS. STA. LUCIA
MAR 25	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
MAR 28	PBA: SHELL VS. GINEBRA
MAR 20	NCA 7-COCK DERBY

For tickets, call TicketNet at 911-5555

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	LANGIT MO, KALIGAYAHAN KO
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	LANGIT MO LIGAYA KO
B	
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	MILAN
CINEMA-2	LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO
CINEMA-3	DRAGON VS NINJA
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	CARMEN
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	KUYA
CINEMA-6	U-BELT
CINEMA-7	COLD MOUNTAIN
CINEMA-8	ANNIE B
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	TORQUE
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HIDALGO
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
CINEMA-12	LOVE ACTUALLY
CINEMA-14	GOTHIKA
CINEMA-15	GRUDGE 2

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PIÑAS)	RUNAWAY JURY
CINEMA-1	ANNIE B
CINEMA-2	COLD MOUNTAIN
CINEMA-4	TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

OPENS TOMORROW!
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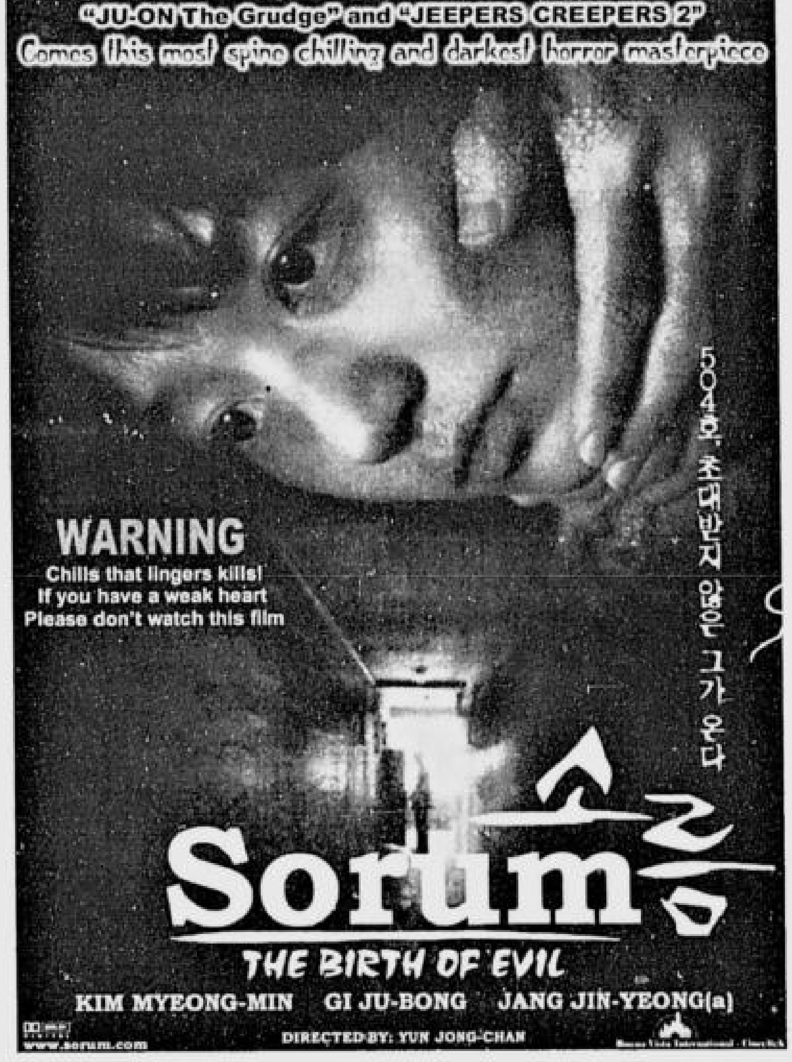
"JU-ON The Grudge" and "JEEPERS CREEPERS 2"
Comes this most spine chilling and darkest horror masterpiece


504호 초대받지 않은 그가 온다

WARNING
Chills that lingers kills!
If you have a weak heart
Please don't watch this film

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THE BIRTH OF EVIL
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DIRECTED BY: YUN JONG-CHAN
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CINEMA 1 THX	HIDALGO	10:20, 1:10, 4:00, 6:50, 9:40
2	THE GRUDGE 2	12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
3	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:45 DTS
4	CARMEN	10:40, 1:10, 3:40, 6:20, 9:00
5	50 FIRST DATES	
6	LOVE ACTUALLY	10:20, 1:10, 4:00, 6:50, 9:40 SDDS
7	COLD MOUNTAIN	12:10, 3:00, 6:00, 9:00
8	LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO	11:00, 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 9:50
9	SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE	12:40, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00
10	TORQUE	10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:45

MATINEE: Monday to Friday/ 10 am-4pm except holidays
Matinee Price: P100 THX cinema / P80 for one level cinemas
Regular Price: P130 THX / P95/65 for two levels cinemas / P95 for one level cinemas

ERMITA 526-7185 / 536-7809 to 12

1	THE GRUDGE 2	11:55, 2:00, 4:05, 4:40, 6:10, 8:15, 10:00 DOLBY DIGITAL EX
2	HIDALGO	11:00, 1:35, 4:10, 6:45, 9:40
3	50 FIRST DATES	11:50, 1:55, 4:00, 6:05, 8:10, 10:00
4	CARMEN	11:55, 2:00, 4:05, 6:10, 8:10, 10:00
5	TORQUE	11:00, 1:05, 3:10, 5:15, 7:20, 9:40
6	LOVE ACTUALLY	11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 7:40, 10:00 SDDS
7	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	10:35, 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15, 9:40

Big R Supercenter METRO EAST 682-8193/99 / 682-8280

1	LOVE ACTUALLY	12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00
2	50 FIRST DATES	SDDS
3	TORQUE	10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
4	HIDALGO	12:00, 3:00, 6:00, 9:00
5	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
6	THE GRUDGE 2	10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
7	CARMEN	11:10, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 9:50 DTS
8	LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO	11:00, 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00

Big R Supercenter NOVALICHES / FAIRVIEW 935-3229 / 31

1	THE GRUDGE 2	11:25, 1:15, 3:05, 4:55, 6:45, 8:35 DOLBY DIGITAL
2	50 FIRST DATES	DOLBY
3	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	11:45, 1:55, 4:05, 6:15, 8:30
4	ANNIE B.	12:05, 2:10, 4:15, 6:20, 8:30 DOLBY
5	HIDALGO	10:40, 12:05, 2:50, 5:35, 8:30 DOLBY
6	TORQUE	11:25, 1:15, 3:05, 4:55, 6:45, 8:35
7	LOVE ACTUALLY	10:40, 12:05, 2:50, 5:35, 8:30 DOLBY
8	CARMEN	11:50, 2:15, 4:40, 7:05, 9:00 DOLBY

Citisquare MALABON 288-0985/2575
1 HIDALGO
2 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
3 ANNIE B.
4 LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO

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1 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
2 LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO
3 CARMEN
4 HIDALGO

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1 TORQUE
2 50 FIRST DATES
3 DUPLEX
4 ANNIE B.
5 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN

Big R Supercenter LIPA 757-3664 / 312-5870
1 TORQUE
2 ANNIE B.
3 DRAGON VS. NINJA
4 GHOST HOUSE
5 DUPLEX

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Honesty, credibility in doing bogus job

From page A27

my life.'"

For Willie, the art of impersonation requires a lot of work—from choosing the subjects up to scouting for costumes, and formulating the right prosthetics and makeup.

He says his criteria for choosing a subject to portray is "who's popular and who's not" or "the very popular because they are doing good or the notoriously unpopular because they are doing bad."

"The characters I portray might be ridiculously funny and really portrayable," he says.

With the exception of Amelita "Ming" Ramos and Haydee Yorac, the country's No. 1 satirist has shied away from impersonating female characters because he says he is being careful not to offend or ridicule them. The reason why he agreed to do an impersonation of the former First Lady was because it was for a television commercial and the shots were controlled in such a way that he could convincingly look like a real woman and not like "a gay who is wearing a wig."

Caricatures are Willie's basis for the roles that he plays because they are where outstanding features of a particular figure are made prominent. In this aspect, it helps a lot that Willie is a Fine Arts graduate and is trained to accurately estimate proportions of facial features and body structures in relation to his own.

This is also where the use of prosthetics comes in. If it is necessary, Willie makes use of prosthetics. In fact, he has a mold of his face from which prosthetics made for him are patterned.

"From the mold, I would add to my nose or my ear," he says.

On its own, doing character impersonations is an art—one that is far more complicated and detail-oriented than anything else.

When it comes to choosing an appropriate wig to go with the look of a particular subject, Willie is very meticulous, he admits. He says that he wants it to look real so that he invests a lot in having them custom-made to suit the character he is playing.

For his FPJ wig, which he is using for his show, he recycled an old wig he used to wear when he was doing Randy Santiago impersonations during the height of the singer's popularity in the late '80s.

The 60-something comedian is also very particular about the accessories he uses, like FPJ's eyeglasses, for example.

"That's why it could be expensive," he says. "That's the investment. It's difficult to look for the signature glasses that FPJ wears, but I don't have a choice."

Willie says the brand of Fernando Poe Jr.'s eyeglasses is Carolina Herrera. Former President Joseph Estrada and Sen. Ping Lacson use Silhouette. Even if the accessories are very expensive, he does not regret investing on them since he does not want to compromise credibility, Willie says.

Even details, like FPJ wearing his watch on his right wrist and Estrada walking with a limp on his left foot, do not escape Willie's eyes. He tries to find out the stories behind the extraordinary habits, mannerisms and the overall appearance of people he portrays. Out of his dedication to get to know his subjects well, or perhaps, out of curiosity, too, Willie even goes as far as researching the story behind former President Fidel Ramos' scar on his cheek beside his

HONESTY A24

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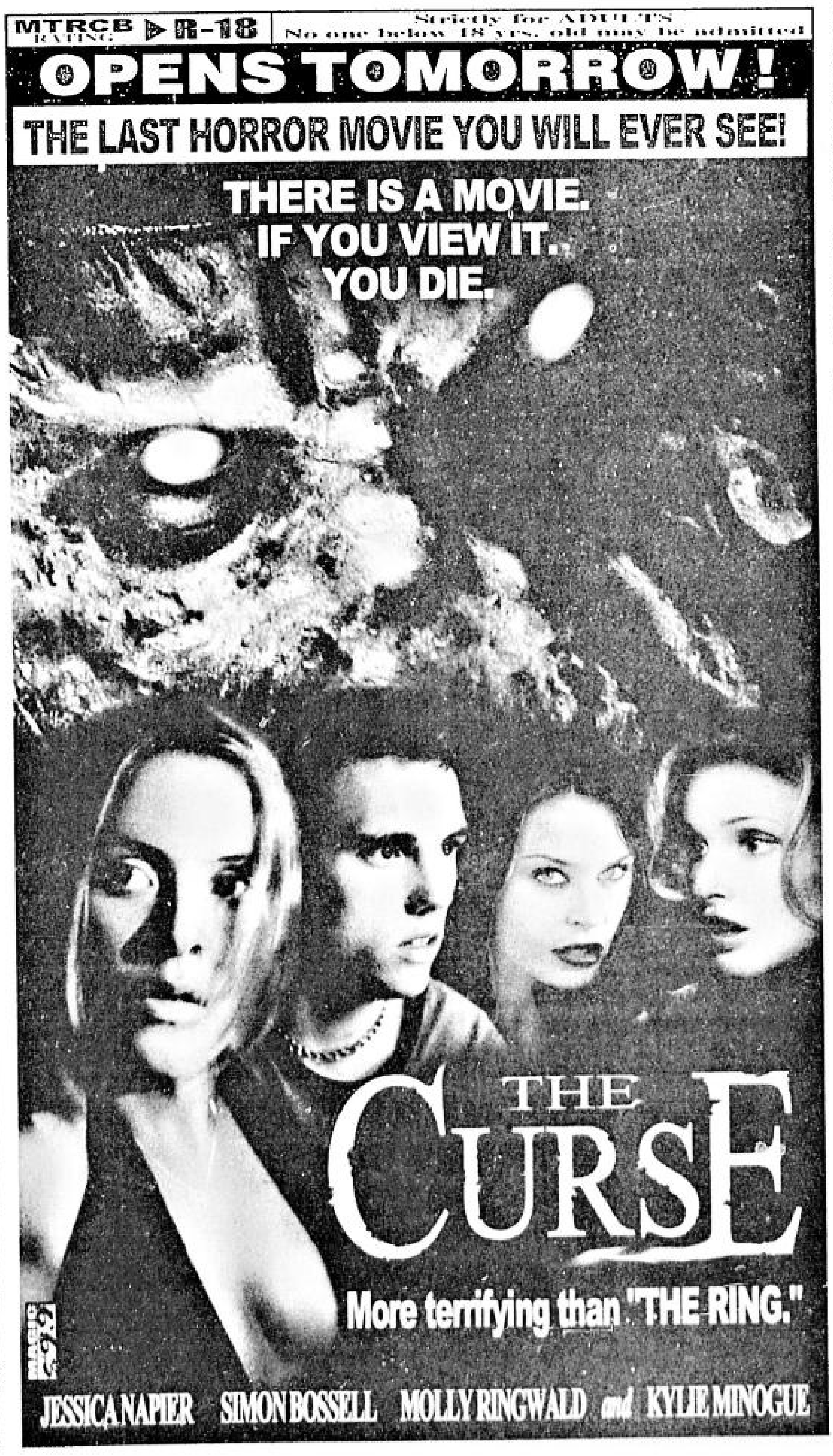
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WILLIE NEPOMUCENO

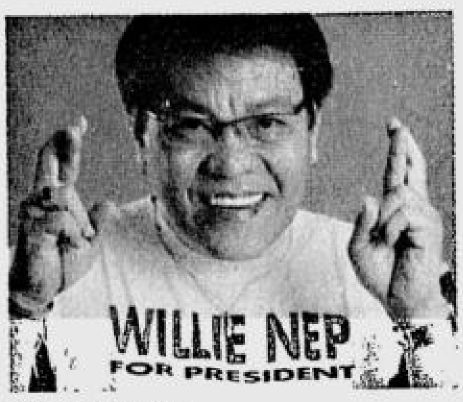
Honesty, credibility in doing bogus job

By Kathryn Fatima Reyes

HIS FONDNESS for the arts was what encouraged Willie Nepomuceno to become an 'entertainer,' which he prefers to be called rather than being referred to as a comedian or stand-up comic.

"Actually, *ang gusto ko sana dati, mag-artista o kumanta. Eh paano naman ako mag-aartista, eh ang artista dapat matangkad o kaya tisoy. Ang* singer *naman, dapat ibang-iba ang boses. Hindi ako umubra.* So *ang ginawa ko, ginaya ko sila. Ngayon hindi na ko makakanta ng sarili kong boses* (I've wanted to be an actor. But how could I when I wasn't tall and a mestizo. If I became a singer, my voice should be outstanding. I couldn't make it, so I decided to imitate popular singers. Now, I cannot sing using my own voice)," he says with a laugh.

Willie Nepomuceno, who will be doing a repeat of his "Willie Nep 4 President" on March 17 and 18 at the Music Museum with Rene "Ate Glow" Pacunla and Kaye Dacer, reveals that his on-and-off career started during the pre-Martial Law years when he started to mimic Marcos and other government officials during rallies inside the University of the Philippines campus. He then graduated to television guestings until he joined the original Super Laff-in gang. Eventually, he was given his own radio show and was also offered a TV program.



NEPOMUCENO

"*Pinag*-report *ako noon ng* Monday *para malaman ko yung* rudiments of the job. *Eh kaya lang, Sabado pa lang, pinasara na ang* ABS (CBN) *dahil sa* Martial Law, *naputol ang* career *ko* (I was told to report on Monday. But on Saturday, Martial Law was declared and ABS-CBN was closed down. Martial Law stalled my career)."

Like most media personalities during the Marcos administration, Willie went into hiding. He resurfaced when he ran out of money and was asked to be a guest in Nora Aunor's "Superstar" show. It was a risk, he says.

"When I guested, no one picked me up. I found out that even before I went into hiding, I was not even being hunted," he relates.

It turned out that Willie had a cousin who was in the military and it was this cousin who made it possible for Willie to be able to walk the streets freely at that time. Since then, Willie went on to become the pioneer in the industry as an impersonator.

Asked if he had ever been bribed to make a politician that he lampoons look good in his shows, Willie admits that this had happened.

"But I won't let the situation get ahead. Especially during election time. I tell them straight that I'm not for it, that I'm not the type.

"There was even a time during Marcos' rule that a loyalist, who was a general at that, offered me a deal. And it was even in dollars, *ha*.

"But the true loyalist would not have received pay. We couldn't be bought. In the end, I just told him that 'I fear for

HONESTY/A26

Vagina sisters

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

THE NEW Voice Company opens its 2004 theatre season and begins celebrations leading up to their 10th year anniversary with the staging of their hit play "The Vagina Monologues" by **Eve Ensler.**

The special one weekend run from March 18 to 20 at 9 p.m. at the new Republic of Malate Theatre also celebrates Women's Month in the Philippines.

I had a blast with **Ces Drilon** (and other colleagues) when we were a part of "TVM" last year. Being all free-spirited, we were all comfortable with our sexuality and sensuality. To this day, Ces and I fondly call each other as "Vagina Sisters!"

The play stars singing sensation **Jaya**, NVC leading actress **Jenny Jamora** and acclaimed TVM original actress **Tami Monsod**. Tami originated the play in 2000 and performed in it for three consecutive runs in Manila. She has toured with the play all over the country, and to Hong Kong and Singapore twice.

Tami remains one of the play's most sought-after artists—locally and internationally.

Jenny has been performing for Vday shows (the play's fundraising event) since 2001. She understudied all the actresses in the 2002 run (now having the distinction of being only one of two actresses who can play all the parts and do all the monologues), taking over as main actress for several national productions.

Jaya continues to amaze concert-goers with her voice and dynamism onstage. Few people know that Jaya is also a talented actress. At last year's Vday event, she surprised audiences with her moving portrayal of the monologue—"Because He Liked to Look at It"—about a woman who has a good experience with a man. For the 2004 run, Jaya gets to do a hilarious show-stopping monologue where she will be essaying over 16 different moans onstage!

For tickets call the NVC Actors Studio at 8966695/8965497. Tickets are also available at all Ticketworld outlets, National Bookstore, Robinson's Dept Stores, Music Museum and Tower Records.

For feedback e-mail friends_elpueblo@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com.

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LOVE ACTUALLY R18 1:15, 4:00, 6:45, 9:30	GOTHIKA R13 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00	HIDALGO PG13 12:15, 2:50, 5:25, 8:00, 10:30

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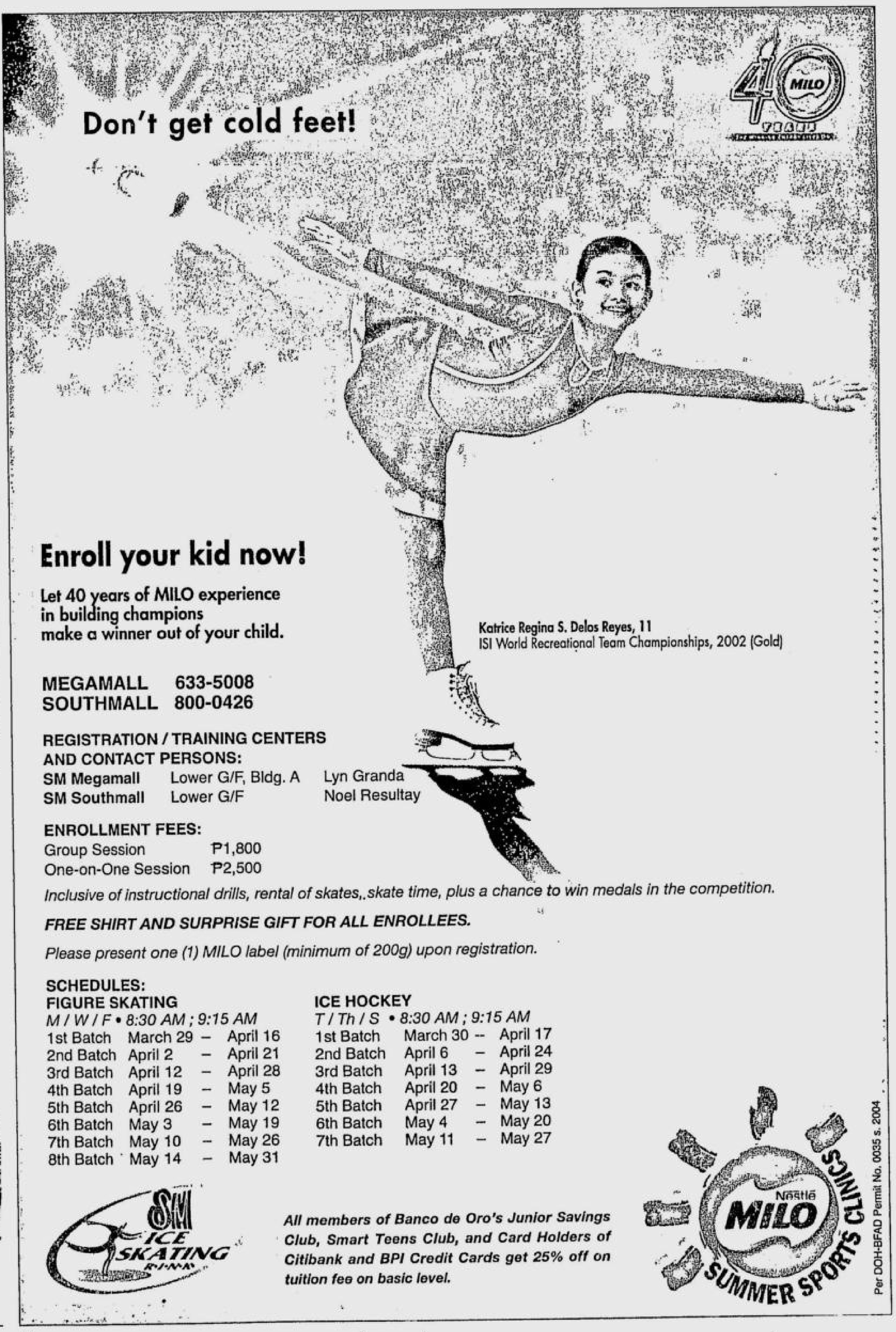
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4th Batch	April 19	–	May 5
5th Batch	April 26	–	May 12
6th Batch	May 3	–	May 19
7th Batch	May 10	–	May 26
8th Batch	May 14	–	May 31

ICE HOCKEY
T / Th / S • 8:30 AM ; 9:15 AM

1st Batch	March 30	–	April 17
2nd Batch	April 6	–	April 24
3rd Batch	April 13	–	April 29
4th Batch	April 20	–	May 6
5th Batch	April 27	–	May 13
6th Batch	May 4	–	May 20
7th Batch	May 11	–	May 27

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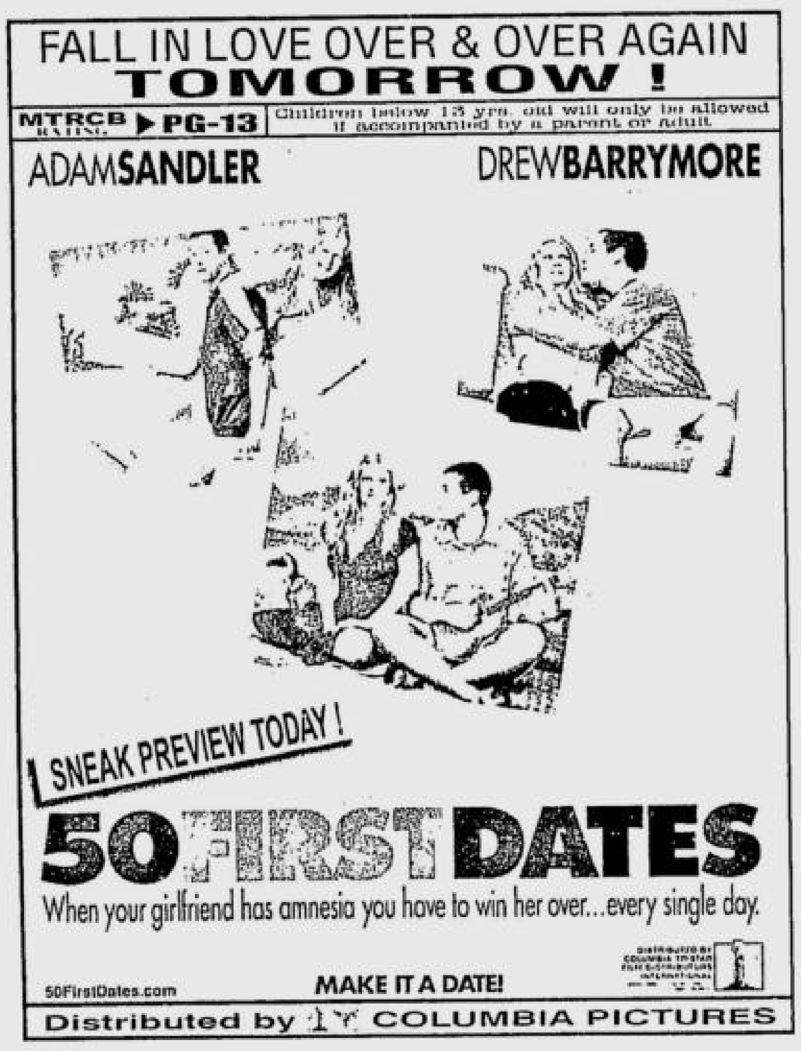
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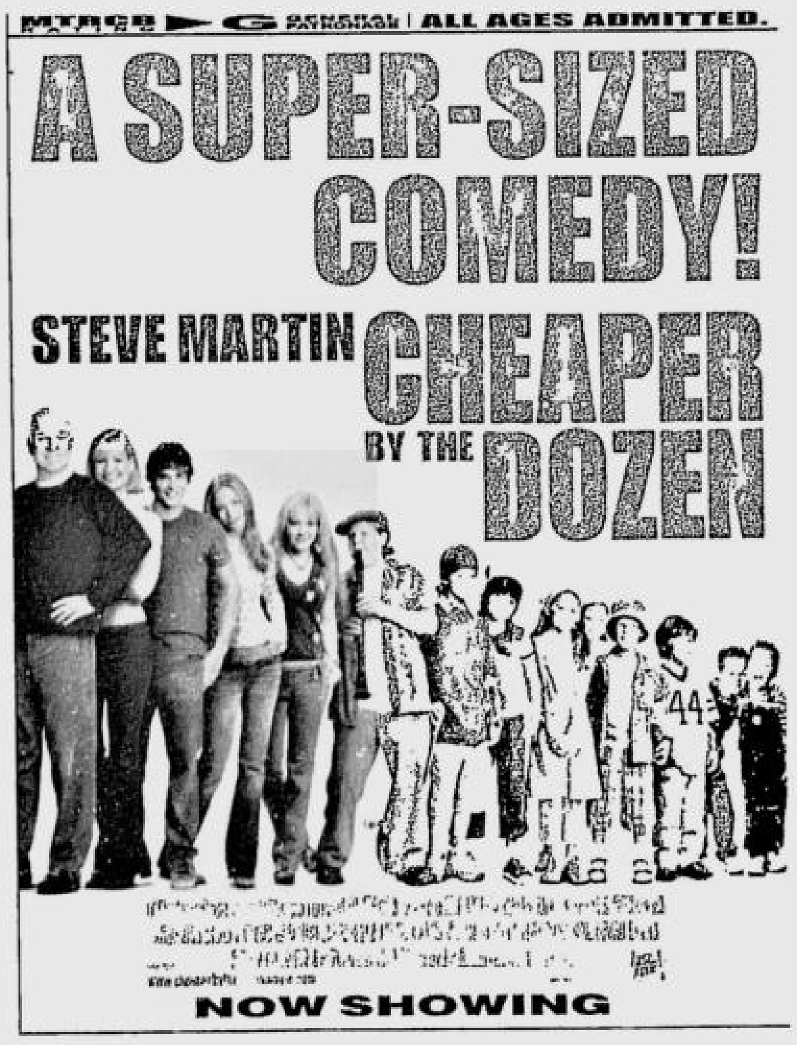
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ENTERTAINMENT

FAMILY picture of the bride and groom with their sponsors and retinue.

BOUND by the cord by Mr. and Mrs. Aga Muhlach with Gretchen Barretto assisting in the ritual.

PRESIDENT Macapagal Arroyo and the groom's mother Conchita Ledesma share a light moment with the newlyweds.

JULES-ASSUNTA NUPTIALS

Groom forgets to kiss bride

By Marinel R. Cruz

THE GROOM nearly forgot to kiss the bride, who had to remind him to seal their marriage vows with a kiss. And when he did, he had to tiptoe to reach her lips because she was easily a head taller than him.

The cameras then started flashing when actress Assunta de Rossi and Negros Occidental Rep. Jules Ledesma finally kissed at the end of their wedding ceremony on Sunday night at the Santuario de San Antonio Church in Forbes Park, Makati.

The couple walked down the altar laughing at themselves.

Once inside the bridal car, a 1969 vintage Mercedez Benz 600, the couple were lost in a deep kiss that a television camera man dutifully recorded from the front seat.

Stalled

The car stalled briefly in front of the church, but was running again after a few attempts to start the engine.

Jules bought the bridal car from the brother of the bride's father in New York City for about P5 million. He had to pay another P2.5 million for taxes and P2 million for shipment, one of his aides told INQUIRER Entertainment on Sunday.

The car arrived in Manila only on March 8, the aide added. It had to be repaired because oil had started to leak from it.

The wedding, which started a few minutes after 7 p.m., lasted for less than an hour.

The President arrived in church at 6:30 p.m.

Radiant

Assunta arrived 30 minutes later, looking radiant in her wedding gown designed by New York high-fashion priestess Vera Wang. She wore a crystal-studded veil made by Rhett Eala.

The Ledesma-Schiavone (the bride's maiden name in real life) wedding is considered the largest high-society gathering in the country so far. Guests were some of the brightest stars in show biz, the bride's world, and top political figures, colleagues of the groom.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo led the couple's principal sponsors, along with Speaker Jose de Venecia, business tycoons Eduardo "Danding" Conjuangco, Manuel Pangilinan, Oscar Lopez, film producer Marichu Vera Perez, singer-composer Jose Mari Chan and socialite Imelda "Meldy" Cojuangco.

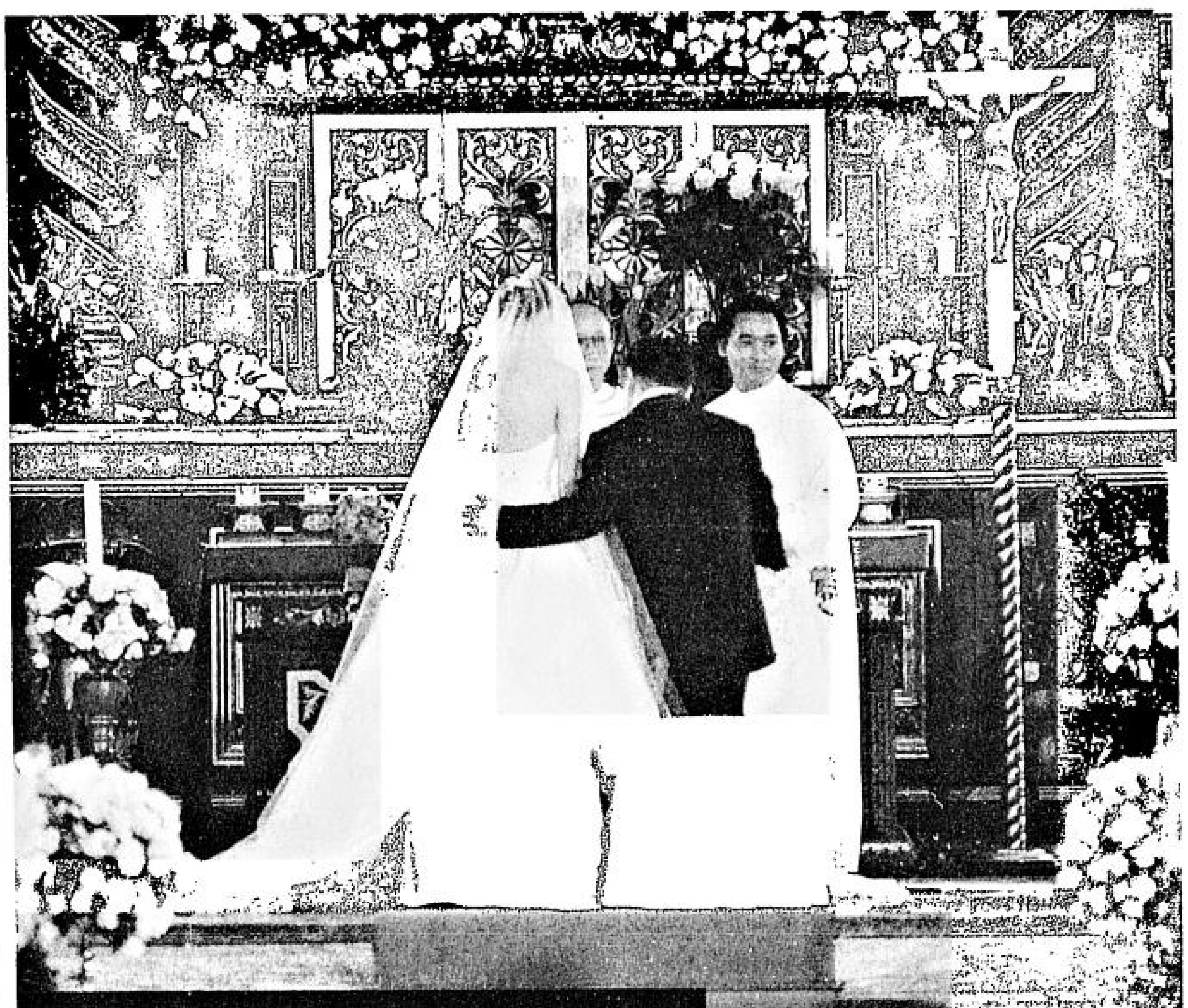
But Cojuangco and Maceda were represented only by proxies.

Secondary sponsors were Beaver and Jackie Lopez (candle), Jinggoy Estrada and Gretchen Barretto (veil) and Aga and Charlene Muhlach (cord).

Bridesmaids were Ciarra Sotto, Claudine Barretto, Rica Peralejo and Nikki Valdes.

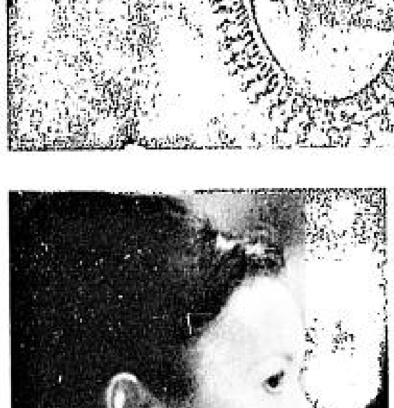
Former Negros Occidental Rep. Carlos Cojuangco and Jules' son Julio Carlos Tomas Ledesma were the men of honor.

Maids of honor were Assunta's younger sister Alessandra and Jules' daughter Cristina Julieta Victoria Ledesma.



THE VIEW from the back reveals a loving gesture of Jules, whose arms is around Assunta's waist, rivals the intimacy of the couple gazing into each other's eyes.

PHOTOS BY JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN



PENSIVE mother of the bride, Nenita, who held back tears that might cloud Assunta's day.

FATHER of the bride, Luigi Shiavone

Only Estrada was not present among the secondary sponsors.

Bishop Antonio J. Ledesma, S.J., was the officiating priest with Bishop Jose Advincula Jr. D.D. and Rev. Antonio Ma. Rosales, O.F.M., as co-celebrants.

Assunta, 21, married Jules, who is 22 years her senior, in a civil wedding in December 2003, despite the disapproval of her mother Nenita Schiavone and sister Alessandra.

Whole family

But last Sunday, her whole family was present: mother Nenita, father Luigi Schiavone and younger sisters Margherita and Isabel. Except for Alessandra and Assunta, the Schiavones are based in Maglie, Italy.

"Of course I'm happy. Don't I look happy? I cry easily but this time, I'm trying hard not to. This is Assunta's special day," said Nenita at the reception held at the Rizal Ballroom of the Shangri-La Hotel in Makati.

"I've already accepted him," she said referring to her son-in-law. "I prayed for this day and night. When they finally exchanged their 'I dos' before God tonight, I said to myself, 'this is it. There's no turning back.'"

Nenita said her husband and two daughters, who arrived in Manila on March 10, would fly back to Italy on Thursday. But she will stay with Alessandra for two more weeks.

"This is our gift to Assunta," she said. "Bringing the whole family here is not easy. Her sisters had to be absent for two weeks in school."

In an earlier interview with INQUIRER Entertainment, Assunta said she had paid for her family's air fare to the Philippines and for their accommodations here.

Nenita said she only got to speak with Jules a few hours before the ceremony.

"I smiled at him and he smiled back. Oh *'di ba*? Miss Friendship *ako*," she said in jest.

"I congratulated him. He introduced me to the principal sponsors.

"He called me Ma, and I was touched," she added. "They promised to go to our house in Italy soon."

Maid of honor to the hilt

If this visit pushes through, this would be the first time that Jules steps foot in his in-laws' house in Northern Italy.

Sister Alessandra played the role of the maid of honor to the hilt, occasionally going up the altar to fix her sister's veil and the cord that bounded Assunta to Jules.

"I'm feeling okay," said Alessandra, minutes before the ceremony. "My whole family is with me. I feel happy because for the first time in a long while, we're complete."

After their highly publicized altar date, the couple would hie off to Amanpulo in Palawan, Puerto Princesa, according to wedding planner Gigi Bautista.

GBA Event was hired as the wedding coordinator. Penk Ching did a three-layered carrot walnut fondant cake, with each layer measuring up to 10 inches tall.

Patrice Ramos Diaz designed the gowns of the bridesmaids in various monochromatic shades of coral, which was the wedding's motif.

Also seen at the wedding reception in Shangri-La Makati were couples Eddie Gutierrez and Annabel Rama, Susan Roces, German Moreno, Raymart Santiago, Bernard Palanca, Franklin Drilon and Baby Arenas.

Nolyn and Lisa Cabangon sang Broadway tunes which Jules personally picked, said Bautista.

Skirmish

The wedding will be aired on Friday exclusively on ABS-CBN Channel 2.

As with most events that ABS-CBN had acquired for airing, the Ledesma-Schiavone wedding was not spared from the usual skirmishes that arise between staffers of the Lopez-owned television network and members of other media covering the event.

INQUIRER photographer Jess Yuson complained that he had a difficult time entering the church even if he was given accreditation to cover the wedding by ABS-CBN and the corresponding press badge to wear during the event, according to INQUIRER chief photographer Ernie Sarmiento.

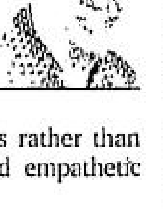
Yuson almost came to blows with personnel wearing ABS-CBN identification cards, who had prevented him from getting near the altar.

Even at the reception, photographers had to surrender their cameras to a table designated for that purpose.

GROOM/ A24

Inadequate showcase

VIEWFINDER



Nestor U. Torre

IN past productions, **Jolina Magdangal** has proven that she is one of our most versatile young performers, singing, dancing and acting with equal verve. It's unfortunate, therefore, that her latest movie, "Annie B.," directed by **Louie Ignacio,** turns out to be an inadequate showcase for her unique combination of talents.

The problem begins with the script. Jolina's character is an *ukay-ukay* vendor who helps her mother support their family, but she doesn't let her work dampen her love for life, and dancing and singing at a disco.

Jolina is being wooed by a taxi driver (**Jordan Herrera**), but falls instead for an initially shooty advertising executive (**Dingdong Dantes**), who comes from an even snootier family.

His father nixes his son and heir's romance with the "lowly" *ukay-ukay* vendor, prompting Dingdong to finally get up the nerve to disobey his autocratic dad and prevent Jolina from marrying Jordan on the rebound.

This predictable plot drastically limits the production's creative possibilities and interest value. But what really fudges up the movie is the direction, which stresses trendy visual hi-jinks rather than clear, interesting and empathetic storytelling.

Also problemmatic is Jolina's overlong dependence on her signature "Kooky" characterization, which has endeared her to her fans through the years, but looks rather long in the tooth now that she's in her mid-20s.

It really is time for Jolina to move on to something else, and for her fans to grow up with her. Since she's a genuine talent, she should be able to pull the change off, if it's creatively conceptualized and executed.

The movie's other distractions include some excessively hyper and gay supporting performances, plot and character points that lack adequate follow-through, and much too facile solutions to the lead characters' problems to enable the film to achieve its regulation slap-happy ending.

Jolina deserves better handling than this, and she should do a really good movie soon, or else she could be roundly trounced by her box-office rivals, like **Claudine Barretto** and **Judy Ann Santos.**

Since Jolina is one of our best young musical-comedy performers, that will never do!

'Dinosaur Planet'

TONIGHT's episode of "Dinosaur Planet" (9 p.m.) on the Discovery Channel is on a female saltasaur, a large plant-eater. On March 17, the animated special focuses on a pyroraptor, a small predator.

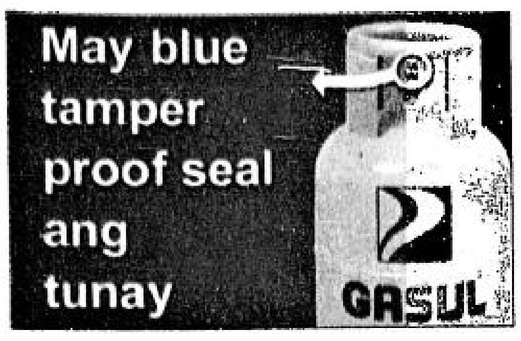
'Minority Report'

AT 8 p.m. on March 21, the Tom **Cruise** starrer, "Minority Report," will be screened on HBO. A film by **Steven Spielberg,** the production casts Cruise as a top cop in the year 2054, who suddenly finds himself being targeted as a future killer, and is thus forced to run for his life.

Co-star **Colin Farrell** plays a Justice Department liaison who spearheads the manhunt for Cruise's character.

For a backgrounder on the film, catch "HBO Sneak Peek: Minority Report" at 8:30 p.m. on March 17.

INADEQUATE/ A24



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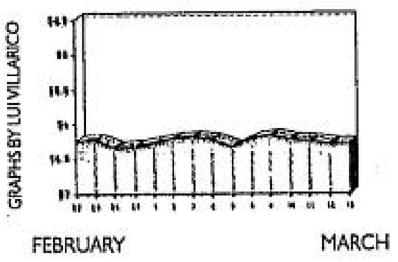

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As of 5 p.m., March 15, 2004

¥ 110.82 = $1

As of 5 p.m., March 15, 2004

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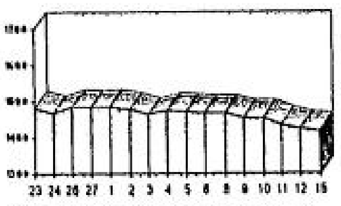
per ounce Hong Kong, March 15, 2004

Stocks near 3-month low

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

SHARE prices closed down 0.31 percent yesterday, extending recent losses to leave the market at its lowest level in nearly three months, dealers said.

Gains in some blue chips, including PLDT, limited the downside, offsetting losses in property developer Ayala Land and Meralco.

Investors remained largely sidelined in the absence of positive leads as they await more 2003 corporate results, with lingering security and pre-election political worries undermining sentiment, dealers said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index shed 4.45 points to close at the day's low of 1,419.34, off the high of 1,434.50. This is the market's weakest close since Dec. 18, when it finished at 1,410.77.

Volume was 137.19 million shares worth P578.5 million after 111.67 million shares worth P623.4 million on Friday.

Losers led gainers 25 to 17, while 27 stocks were unchanged.

The all-shares index was up 0.50 points at 904.62, the commercial-industrial index fell 5.44 to 2,208.91, property was down 10.46 at 501.66 and mining off 13.02 to 1,458.60. Oil was unchanged at 1.20. Banking and financial services advanced 3.58 to 428.29.

Analysts said the bombings in the Spanish capital Madrid last week remained fresh in the minds of investors, while political uncertainties ahead of the May 10 presidential elections here continue to take a toll on sentiment.

Investors were also awaiting the decision today of the investment committee of the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) in the US, on whether to keep the Philippines on its list of permissible investment sites. CalPERS consultant Wilshire Consulting has given the Philippines failing grades as an investment site. *AFP*

By Michelle V. Remo and Doris C. Dumlao

TREASURY bill rates shot up at yesterday's auction as investors continued to demand a premium for the uncertainty over who will win the presidential elections on May 10.

National Treasurer Mina Figueroa blamed the growing volatility on the political front for the perceived lack of interest in the risk-free government securities.

"The closer we get to the elections, the noisier the campaigns become. Hopefully, we've seen the worst," Figueroa said during a briefing after yesterday's auction.

The average rate on 91-day bills—which commercial banks use in setting their lending rates—jumped to 7.616 percent from 6.435 percent on Feb. 16, the last time the government accepted bids on the bills.

It had offered P3.5 billion of the bills, received bids for P2.26 billion and accepted P1.83 billion.

The Treasury rejected all bids in its last auction on March 1, and in the latest auction again refused to pay the rates investors were demanding on 364-day bills. "We decided to go for full rejection of the bids for the 364-day T-bill because they were much higher than the (less than 9-percent) rate in the secondary market," Figueroa said.

The Treasury said it would have had to pay 9.373 percent to 9.464 percent if it had accepted bids, up from 8.384 percent on Feb. 2. It offered P2 billion of the bills and received bids for P2.35 billion.

But it accepted bids on 182-day paper at an average rate of 8.612 percent, up from 7.834 percent on Feb. 16. It offered P2.5 billion of the bills, received bids for P1.7 billion and accepted P1.15 billion.

Traders said banks were demanding a high premium on short-term government debt paper due to political risks ahead of the elections. Polls showed a close race between President Macapagal Arroyo and movie star Fernando Poe Jr.

Figueroa stressed that the move to accept high bids had nothing to do with the government's cash position, which she said remained healthy. The treasurer said that with the recent sale of $500 million worth of global bonds, the government had enough cash.

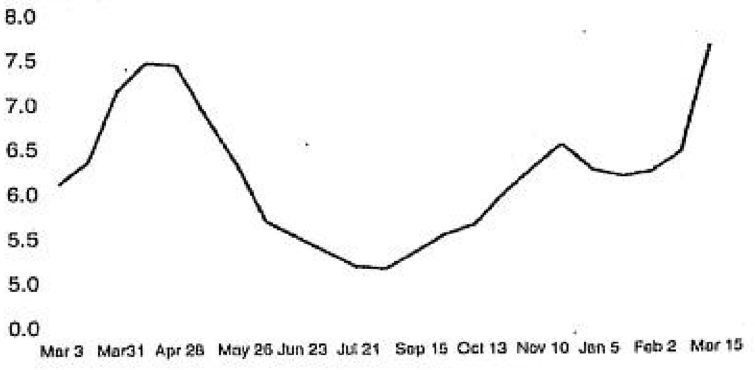
Aside from increasing political risk, Figueroa also attributed the market's tendency to seek higher returns to the low liquidity in the market brought by the recent increase in bank reserve requirement.

But Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the rise in the benchmark T-bill rate would not put the mone-

TREASURY/ B3

91-DAY TREASURY BILL RATES

March 3,2003 to March 15, 2004



PBCom signs ₱10.6-B rehab deal with PDIC

By Doris C. Dumlao

PHILIPPINE Bank of Communications expects to post P200 million to P1 billion in annual profit starting this year following yesterday's signing of a P10.6-billion rehabilitation deal with the state-owned Philippine Deposit Insurance Co.

PBCom president Isidro Alcantara said the bank's three major stockholder groups had put in escrow P3 billion in fresh capital to bring its total capitalization to P9 billion while PDIC agreed to extend P7.6 billion in financial assistance.

The PDIC assistance will provide the bank support to cover losses arising from the sale of idle assets at substantial discounts of as much as 80 percent of their market value.

The money will be invested in high-yield government securities to cushion the transfer of PBCom's non-performing loans into a special purpose asset vehicle (SPV), Alcantara said.

With the financial package, PBCom plans to embark on a major expansion and modernization program to "strengthen the bank and enhance profitability on a sustained basis."

As a result of the capital infusion by PBCom owners and the PDIC's "financial enhancement program," Alcantara said the bank would become "one of the strongest for its size with a sustained and improved profitability moving forward."

PBCom will form an SPV to handle the sale of its non-performing assets. It has tapped a large multinational accounting firm to conduct the due diligence and valuation for these NPAs.

PBCom also expanded its board to 15 from 12 directors to give board seats to the PDIC and help management achieve the bank's strategic objectives.

"The PBCom SPV could become the first real SPV for non-performing loan management," Alcantara said.

The bank's three major stockholders are the families of Luy (37 percent) Nubla (28 percent) and Chung (26 percent).

From January to September last year, PBCom incurred a net loss of P85.55 million against a net profit of P281.8 million a year ago.

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Steel mate

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

SOMEBODY is busy with politics, spending millions of our tax money to give away goodies, preferably in vote-rich squatter areas.

And so while nobody is looking, the price of steel has gone up there somewhere towards the general direction of Pluto.

In the construction sector, or the little that remains of it, they cannot figure out why the price of steel is going crazy particularly in this country.

The construction business, as you know, has gone to limbo in the past several years, for one, and for another, it also forgot to come back.

But even with the slow demand, why does steel fetch a price like gold? Does it have anything to do with the hectic construction at the former site of "Payanig sa Pasig?"

***

THAT is the huge property right beside the Ortigas Center, that prime lot bounded on three sides by Ortigas Ave., J. Vargas St. and Meralco Ave.

During the administration of Tita Cory, they used to set up a carnival there during the Christmas season called ... well, "Payanig sa Pasig."

Today, some mysterious groups are busy building large commercial spaces on the property—for lease, of course.

Involved in the project is big money. Interestingly, the city government of Pasig is also spending big money on a flyover which definitely benefits the commercial project.

Whether or not the Pasig City government has any interest in the commercial venture, is hard to say. It just spends our tax money on the questionable flyover.

***

FROM what I gathered, the lucky developer of the property is going full swing on a sports complex with a modern golf driving range and several badminton courts.

Nearby along the road system known as C-5, another golf driving range was forced to close down, the one called "Power Golf."

Not too long ago, the same closed driving range caught the ire of a top official of the Pasig City government.

Word went around then that the city official got a shoddy treatment at the driving range. All of a sudden, city hall closed down road access to the area.

Nobody can say if the same official has anything to do with the permanent closure of the driving range. It's just that the closure benefits that lucky developer, whoever he is.

***

IN the busy Ortigas Center, word goes around about the lucky developer, how he responds for instance to the initials "JI."

Lucky JI is known all over the city as having longtime deep connections in the local government.

He also said to have mastered doing construction business with the government, particularly road pavement.

Also being mentioned as part of the project, although you can hear his name only in whispers, apparently because he sows fear in people, is a certain CS.

Now, this CS is said to be close to somebody high up there in this cute administration of Gloriaetta. No wonder!

***

FROM what I heard, it costs so much to rent a store space at the commercial project, so much, in fact, that a shoo-in senatorial candidate is lining it up for his first expose.

You see, the property belongs to the government, under the care of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, or the PCGG.

A Marcos crony, J. Y. Campos, owner of United Laboratories, surrendered it to the PCGG during the time of Tita Cory.

Apparently, Campos acquired the property from Ortigas & Co., developer of the area, for just a little more than a song.

The Ortigas group then ran after the property, claiming they sold it under duress during martial rule. Of course the PCGG would not have any of that! Between the two sides today is a stalemate.

***

ANYWAY, in the old days, before the rise and fall of real estate at the Ortigas area, the PCGG leased out the huge property to carnival operators.

But as I said, it was a seasonal business, making money for the PCGG only during Christmas time. Moreover, at one time, the city mayor closed down the carnival.

All of a sudden, you can see hectic construction on the same lot for strong steel-framed permanent commercial structures.

You have the MC Home Depot, for instance, plus a million eating places, not to mention several million stalls.

In the camp of the future senator, they are wondering if the PCGG even tried to conduct a bidding for the long-term lease contract for property. How much was involved?

***

BUT I'm sure that, although it uses a lot of steel beams, the project on the PCGG property has very little effect on the domestic price of steel.

In the construction business, they are saying that the culprit is China. I don't know if they are using steel to mate or something, but that country is trying to buy all the steel in the world.

Here, as a matter of fact, we are caught in the ripple effect of China's construction boom, even the price of scrap metal is up five to six times.

Everybody is trying to ship scrap metal abroad, putting a big dent on local supply, sending the poor local small steel mills to their knees.

Ask anybody in this cute administration what can be done, and you are likely to hear ... well, nothing. They'll say it is a worldwide phenomenon.

***

IN times like this, when this country falls under the mercy of, er, "worldwide phenomenon," you'd wish we have our own fully integrated steel industry.

But our policy makers thought it wise for us just to import everything, so that we can be part of another worldwide phenomenon called WTO.

They said it was better for us to kill our local industries, because it was cheaper for us just to import everybody.

It was cheaper, because of the excess production abroad, and foreign companies would dive prices to dump everything on us.

Nobody said that, in this world, nothing lasts forever, and the crunch always comes, which is the time the foreign companies make a killing selling everything to us.

This worldwide shortage of steel is a clear example. It is the very thing which, when our government was showing off with our trade liberalization program, our businessmen warned us against. We are now at the mercy of others.

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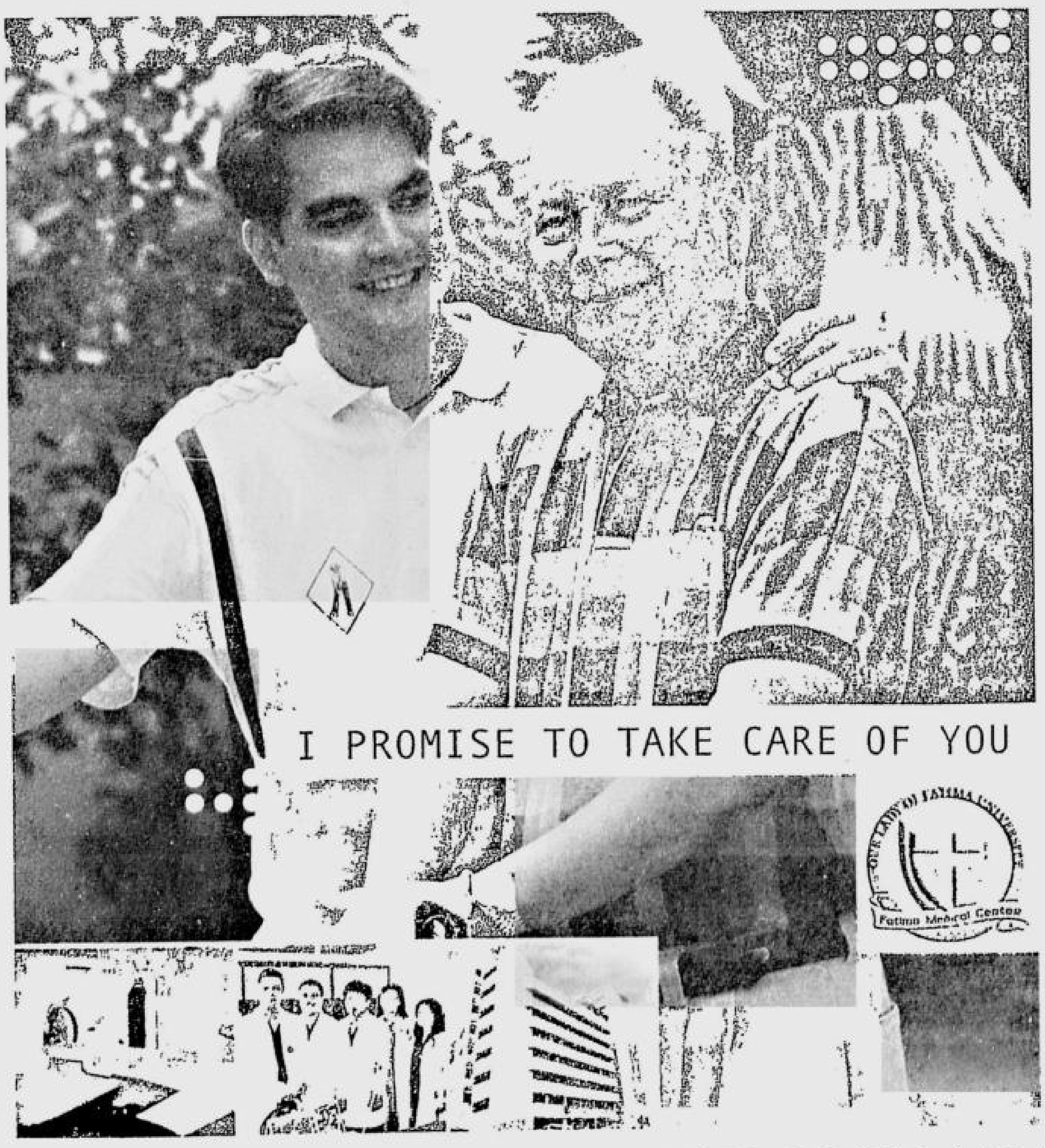

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₱20-M hotel to rise in Subic marina complex

A P20-million, beach-front hotel project recently broke ground in Subic Bay Freeport's Moon Bay Marina complex.

Felicito C. Payumo, chair of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, said the project—a first in Subic—was expected to further increase tourist arrival in the freeport.

Payumo added that the planned Subic Park Hotel would boost SMBA's effort to promote the economic zone not only as an industrial estate but also as a tourist destination.

He said the hotel would rise a few blocks from the popular bar and restaurant Pier One and would be part of a fast-growing tourist enclave in the area.

According to the Subic Coastal Development Corp., the hotel will be put up in the marina complex along with other businesses like a Japanese bistro, a steakhouse, a specialty bakeshop and coffee shops.

Subic Park Hotel Inc. president Teddy Versoza said the project—which aims to attract middle-class clients—would be added to his group's string of hotels, mostly in Baguio City.

The beach-front hotel will be three-story high and will have 30 rooms, according to Randolf Ivan Ruste of project contractor RCDG Construction Corp. The rooms will be on the second and third floors while the lobby and restaurant will be on the ground.

Subic Park Hotel is scheduled for completion in seven months and will open in the last quarter of this year.

"With the growing number of (local and foreign tourists) coming here, we have to come up with first class but reasonably priced facilities to cater to their needs.

Ronnel W. Domingo

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OFW remittances down 5.8% in January

By Doris C. Dumlao

REMITTANCES from overseas Filipino workers fell by 5.8 percent in January to $618 million from a year ago despite the continued increase in workers deployed abroad.

"The lower remittances could be partly attributed to the volatility in the foreign exchange market during the month which could have encouraged OFWs to delay dollar remittances on expectations of a further peso depreciation (that can give) them higher peso equivalent for their remittances," BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said yesterday.

The number of deployed workers rose by 23.3 percent in January to 118,879. The BSP chief said the improved economic outlook in host economies contributed to the increase in the deployment of overseas workers.

But the remittances in January contracted by 5.83 percent from $724.67 million in December, the peak season for OFW inflows.

Based on data from the Philippine Overseas Employment Authority, newly deployed land-based workers grew by 28.7 percent to 100,736 while sea-based workers declined by 0.7 percent to 18,143.

Land-based workers comprised largely of professional/technical (32.7 percent), service (34.8 percent) and production-related (25.4 percent) workers.

"This trend is considered a positive indication of higher OFW remittances moving forward," Buenaventura said.

"As the foreign exchange stabilizes after the May 2004 elections, incentives from OFWs to delay their remittances are expected to ease, resulting in higher OFW remittances," he added.

The United States, Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, Singapore and Japan remained to be the major sources of OFW remittances.

OFW remittances hit an all-time high of $7.6 billion in 2003 due to the increase in the deployment of skilled workers with higher compensation.

OFW remittances account for about 16 percent of the country's total current account receipts and 10 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). For the whole of 2004, the total amount of workers' remittances is projected to reach $7.8 billion, or a 3-percent increase over the 2003 level.

Despite the growing competition from other labor-exporting countries, better employment prospect is expected as many of the host economies are seen to show more robust economic growth this year.

Yields of Treasury . . .

From page B1

tary institution under pressure to raise its own overnight rates.

"It looks like the 91-day T-bill rate now reflects the normal yield curve, where the overnight is lower than the 91-day T-bill rate," Buenaventura said in an interview.

However, Buenaventura said he expected T-bill rates to ease once the national government has completed its $500-million global bond offering.

Since July last year, the BSP's overnight borrowing rate has been kept at 6.75 percent, which now stood lower than the 91-day T-bill rate of 7.616 percent.

"Under normal conditions, the central bank's overnight rates have to be cheaper than T-bill rates when there's excess liquidity.

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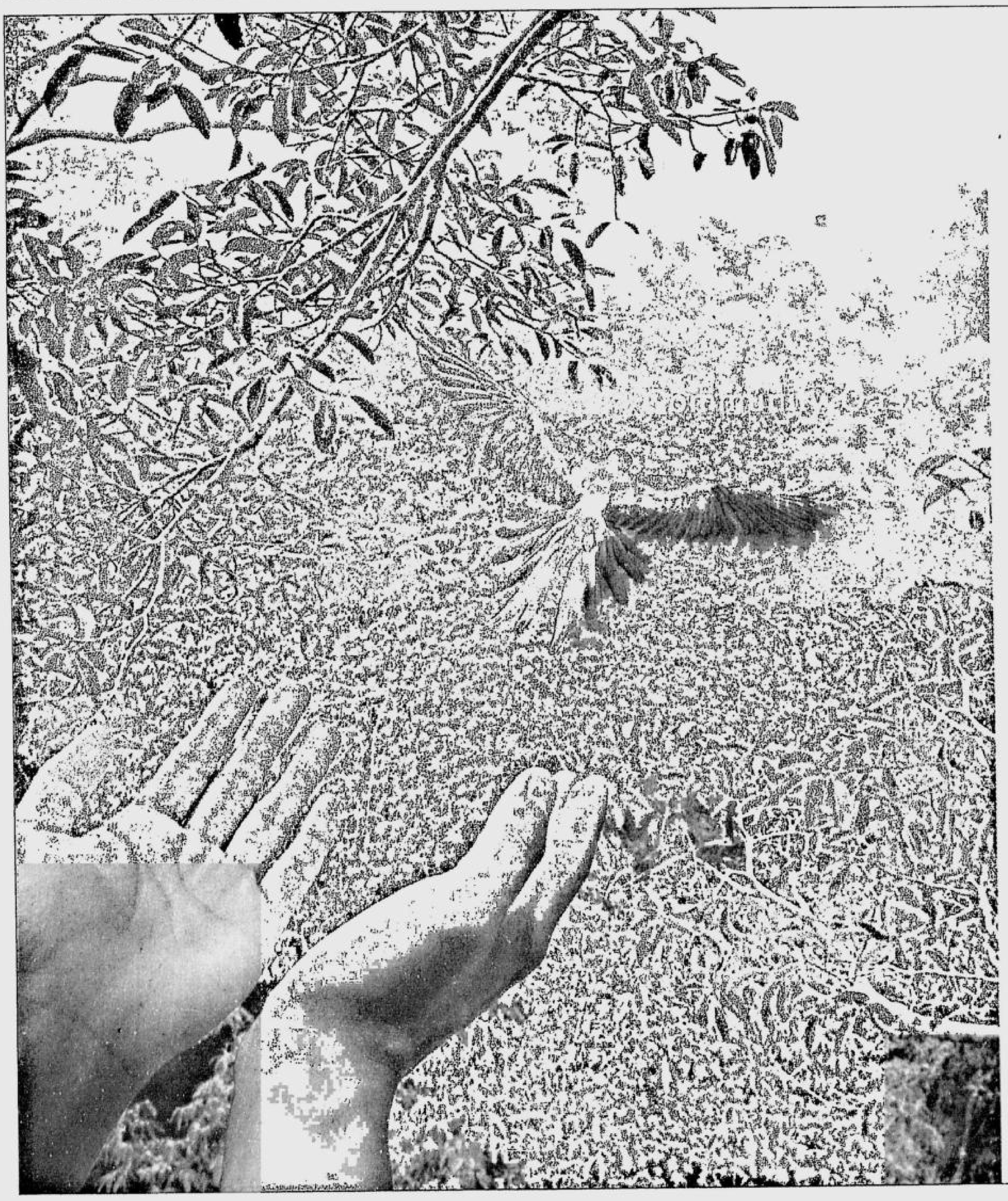

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Piltel commissions JP Morgan to restructure ₱22.5-B debt

By Clarissa S. Batino

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. has tapped foreign investment bank JP Morgan Chase as financial adviser in its ongoing plan to restructure the P22.5-billion debt of Pilipino Telephone Corp.

PLDT said in a disclosure to the stock exchange yesterday that among the options being considered would involve its profitable affiliate, Smart Communications Inc.

JP Morgan Chase had designed four options to restructure the obligations of Piltel, according to a source.

PLDT yesterday said it had presented to "certain creditors" last March 11 "various options regarding Piltel's indebtedness."

The dominant carrier had asked Piltel creditors to consider being paid with 15-year sovereign dollar bonds to settle the outstanding debt or to swap Piltel's debt with a 10-year obligation of its profitable unit Smart.

"Smart has been studying various options regarding Piltel's indebtedness and this ongoing dialogue with certain Piltel creditors has enabled Smart to continue modifying and refining these various options," PLDT said in a statement.

The dominant carrier said "Smart is aiming to present a proposal soon, at which time an appropriate disclosure with further details will be made."

During the March 11 meeting, PLDT proposed to settle the Piltel obligations with the equivalent amount of 15-year ROPs (Republic of the Philippines), which are dollar-denominated sovereign bonds guaranteed by the government.

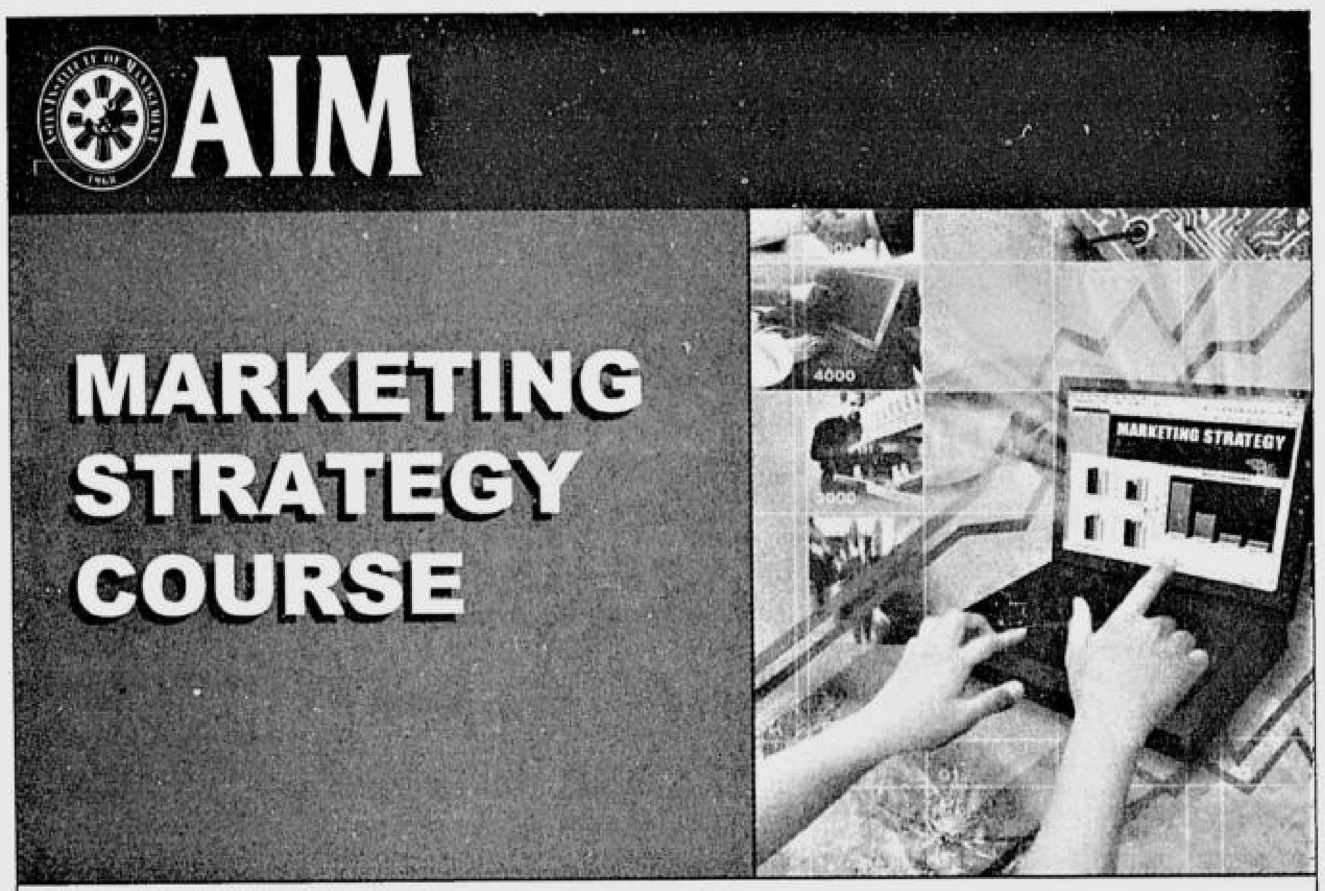
The 15-year ROPs, according to the source, would carry a fixed interest coupon of 2.25 percent a year "for each dollar equivalent of the debt."

The losing subsidiary of PLDT defaulted on its debt payments in 1999. It declared a debt moratorium on P41.1 billion of obligations at that time.

Of the total amount, a third or roughly P13 billion was owed to more than 20 banks. About $280 million was owed to Marubeni, which rolled out 400,000 landlines for Piltel in Mindanao but did not get paid. The remaining amount was owed to bond holders.

On June 4, 2001, Piltel restructured about 98 percent of its liabilities.

Under the 2001 debt restructuring, half of Piltel's debt was cancelled in exchange for PLDT convertible preferred shares. The balance was stretched into 10-year and 15-year loans secured by Pitel's current and future assets.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Prof. Jose M. Faustino, Program Director. He teaches and provides consultancy in the fields of marketing management, strategic planning and formulation, and organization behavior and development. The 1991 Agora Awardee for Excellence in Marketing Education from the Philippine Marketing Association, he was also a visiting professor at USW in Cologne, Germany. Prof. Faustino holds a Master in Business Administration from the Harvard Business School and a Master of Arts in Economics from Amherst College.

Prof. Tomas B. Lopez teaches in the Master in Entrepreneurship (ME) program. He is the Institute Guru of services marketing and the emerging field of one-to-one marketing. His areas of specialization include Social Marketing, Development Communication, Corporate Social Responsibility, Entrepreneurship, Strategic Management, and Information Technology.

Prof. Jose Jesus F. Roces specializes in Marketing, Finance and Human Resources Development, with particular emphasis on the strategic marketing, e-marketing, and CRM. He has a Master's degree in Business Administration from the University of Miami. Currently, the president of the Asia Pacific Marketing Federation and was the former president of the Philippine Marketing Association.

Prof. Eduardo L. Roberto has taught at Northwestern University's Kellogg Graduate School of Management and at the EuroAsian Center of INSEAD France. He was Executive Vice President of Consumer Plus Inc. Vice President of Media Pulse, Inc. and Executive Director of the International Council for the Management of Population Programmes.

Prof. Jacinto C. Gavino, Jr. was the former Associate Dean for Research and Master in Management (MM) program. His major areas of interest in management are in corporate strategy and marketing, family corporations and business ethics, and public administration.

Prof. Jose G. Miranda is a practical Marketing/ Communication professional and academician with years of experience with multinational clients, and advertising agencies as well as various academic institutions in both the Philippines and the United States.

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Mondragon defers owners' meeting

LEISURE firm Mondragon International Philippines Inc. has put off its annual stockholders' meeting to September to allow it to pursue negotiations with government bodies as well as investors for additional funds.

Mondragon chair Jose Antonio U. Gonzales said the funds would be used to settle the firm's obligations to the government and "normalize operations" within the 200-hectare Mimosa Leisure Estate in Clark, Pampanga.

"While we have been holding negotiations with the investors, they have asked for more time in view of what they call political uncertainty and country risk," Gonzales said in his disclosure to the stock exchange.

He did not identify the investors. Mondragon was supposed to hold its annual stockholders' meeting yesterday morning. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

VMC seen getting SEC nod on board

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission (SEC) is allowing sugar milling giant Victorias Milling Corp. to be exempted from placing independent directors in its board until after it has completed its financial recovery plan.

VMC is scheduled to hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 30 to elect a new set of directors.

Under section 38 of the Securities Regulation Code, companies listed on the stock exchange are required to have at least two independent directors.

VMC earlier questioned its compliance with the requirement under special circumstances involving its rehabilitation plan.

SEC Chair Lilia Bautista said the Commission en banc might exempt VMC from the rule since its receiver, Luis Uranza, reports regularly to the government agency.

VMC earlier received a P300-million capital infusion required by its rehabilitation plan through a loan (convertible into equity) from Lucio Tan company Tanduay Holdings Inc.

Victorias accounts for 13 percent of raw sugar and 31 percent of refined sugar production in the Philippines.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 15, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16.75	17	16.75	16.75	244,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	44.5	46	44.5	45	321,700
China Banking Corp.	660	660	660	660	90
Citystate Savings Bank	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	2,400
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	38.5	38.5	38	38.5	43,400
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.59	0.59	0.58	0.59	420,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	24.75	24.75	24.5	24.5	160,100
Philippine National Bank	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	3,000
Phil. Savings Bank	27	27	27	27	10,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Filipino Fund Inc.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	1,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1920	1920	1920	1920	100
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	1,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1435	1440	1435	1440	270
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	22.25	22.25	21.5	21.5	14,600
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.65	0.67	0.65	0.67	250,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	845	850	845	850	35,690
ISM Communications Corp.	0.037	0.037	0.037	0.037	100,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	1,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.7	1.76	1.66	1.68	30,476,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	900	905	900	900	247,830
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	39,700,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	19	19	18	18.25	61,000
Manila Electric Co. B	30.5	30.5	28	28.5	981,100
Petron Corp.	2.95	2.95	2.85	2.85	2,415,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	40,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.05	3.05	3	3	358,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.29	280,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	100,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	29.5	29.5	29	29	14,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	17.75	17.75	17	17	1,335,300
Rfm Corp.	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	80,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56.5	56.5	56	56	113,900
San Miguel Corp. B	68.5	68.5	68.5	68.5	198,300
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	520,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	170,000
Ayala Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	8,411,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1	1	1	1	10,000
APC Group Inc.	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	500,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.5	1.58	1.5	1.56	40,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.55	0.55	3,810,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.1	0.1	500,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	220,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	22.75	22.75	21.75	21.75	323,500
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.84	1.84	1.84	1.84	150,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.02	1.02	1	1	3,610,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	1	1	1	1	100,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	2,040,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.89	0.89	0.88	0.88	400,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14	14.25	14	14.25	67,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	400,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.99	1	0.99	1	1,710,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.16	1.18	1.16	1.18	8,510,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	100,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	22	22	21	21	121,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,800
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	4,500
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.3	5.3	5.1	5.1	6,896,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.125	0.125	420,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	600,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.2	0.205	0.2	0.2	3,430,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.02	1.02	1,786,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	500,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	20,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.8	1.82	1.8	1.82	9,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.8	8,129,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	100,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	300,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	5,000,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	1,207,160	25,467,895.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	108,522,120	467,007,555.00
PRO	21,790,000	85,792,620.00
Mining	400,000	143,000.00
OIL	5,000,000	14,000.00
GRAND TOTALS :	136,919,280	578,425,070.00

AVERAGES		
Bank & Fin Svc	428.29	UP 3.58
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,208.91	DOWN 5.44
PRO	501.66	DOWN 10.46
Mining	1,458.60	DOWN 13.02
OIL	1.20	UNCH 0.00
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	904.62	UP 0.50
Composite	1,419.34	DOWN 4.45

NO. OF ADVANCES: 17; NO. OF DECLINES: 25; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 27; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 69; NO. OF TRADES: 1,696

DISCLOSURES

MONDRAGON International Philippines Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Sept. 13, 9 a.m. at the Mondragon House Ballroom, Makati City.

* * *

ALCORN Gold Resources Corp. moved its offices from the 3/F of Tabacalera Building No.1 to the 2/F of Tabacalera Building No. 2, Paco, Manila.

* * *

TRANS-ASIA Oil and Energy Development Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 2, 3 p.m. at Ballroom 1 of Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Makati City. Only stockholders of record as of March 3 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

ABOITIZ Equity Ventures Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 17, 4 p.m. at the Ballroom of Cebu City Marriott Hotel. Stockholders of record as of March 31 will be entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

PCI Leasing and Finance Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 21, 9:30 a.m. at the Francisco Santiago Hall, Mezzanine Floor of Equitable PCI Bank Tower I, Makati City. Only stockholders of record as of Jan. 15 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

NEGROS Navigation Company Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 28 with record date on March 30. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

March 15, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.817728351	1.000000	56.2880
Japan	Yen	0.007379	0.009024	0.5079
United Kingdom	Pound	1.475918	1.804900	101.5942
Hongkong	Dollar	0.104919	0.128305	7.2220
Switzerland	Franc	0.637456	0.779545	43.8790
Canada	Dollar	0.612714	0.749288	42.1759
Singapore	Dollar	0.477785	0.584283	32.8881
Australia	Dollar	0.597275	0.730407	41.1131
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.169098	2.652590	149.3090
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.218067	0.266674	15.0105
Brunei	Dollar	0.476393	0.582581	32.7923
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000095	0.000116	0.0065
Thailand	Baht	0.020712	0.025329	1.4257
UAE	Dirham	0.222657	0.272287	15.3265
Euro	Euro	1	1.222900	68.8346
Argentina	Peso	0.281007	0.343643	19.3430
Brazil	REAL	0.281393	0.344116	19.3696
Denmark	Kroner	0.134199	0.164112	9.2375
India	Rupee	0.018087	0.022119	1.2450
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.21522	0.263193	14.8146
Mexico	New Peso	0.074658	0.091299	5.1390
New Zealand	Dollar	0.524992	0.642013	36.1376
Norway	Kroner	0.117598	0.143810	8.0948
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014228	0.017400	0.9794
South Africa	Rand	0.121437	0.148505	8.3590
Korea	Won	0.000693	0.000847	0.0477
Sweden	Kroner	0.107921	0.131977	7.4287
Syria	Pound	0.015848	0.019380	1.0909
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024512	0.029976	1.6873
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000427	0.000522	0.0294

CONTINUED RELUCTANCE TO LEND

Bank lending inched up to ₱1.45T in January

By Doris C. Dumlao

LENDING by the country's commercial banks grew by a measly 0.8 percent as of end-January to P1.45 trillion from a year ago, indicating the sector's continued reluctance to lend.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday said that last January's lending growth was a far cry from the 3.8 percent recorded in December, when lending and other business activities were more vigorous owing to the Christmas season.

During the first month of the year, BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said there was a marked increase in lending to mining and quarrying as well as construction sectors, with respective annual growth rates of 76.8 percent and 28.6 percent.

However, these sectors accounted for only a small portion of the total loans extended by the banks. Thus, the increases they posted were not enough to wipe out the decline posted in major borrowing sectors.

In particular, bank lending to the manufacturing sector—which accounted for about 24.4 percent of the total commercial banks' outstanding loan—declined by 7.8 percent in January.

Buenaventura said commercial banks showed increases in loans to the following: community, social and personal services (13.5 percent); transportation, storage and communication (5.7 percent); and, agriculture, fisheries and forestry (5.1 percent).

These sectors accounted for 30.5 percent of the total loans extended as of end-January.

"However, the significant expansion in bank lending to these sectors was offset partly by lower bank lending to the other sectors," Buenaventura said.

Despite the slowdown, the BSP chief said the growth in bank lending had contributed to the sustained, although modest growth in domestic liquidity in January.

"The modest increase in outstanding commercial banks' loans was also accompanied by improvements in the real sector," Buenaventura said, citing higher sales of passenger cars and exports during the period.

"Moving forward; monetary authorities will continue to monitor closely the developments in bank lending activities and ensure that these are appropriately considered, together with other factors bearing on the inflation outlook, in the regular assessment of the stance of monetary policy," he said.

Aware of the banks' reluctance to lend, the BSP plans to use its moral suasion to encourage banks to release more funds and pump-prime the economy.

The institution is hoping to see a lending growth of at least 5 percent this year.

The Bankers Association of the Philippines, for its part, said banks would have no choice but to expand their lending to make money this year.

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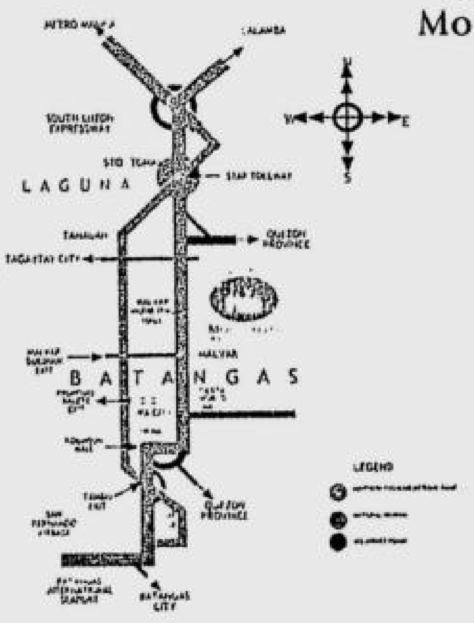

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World markets sit up as US Fed meets

LONDON—Financial markets this week will be dominated by a meeting of the United States Federal Reserve as a rate hike this year looks less likely given a sluggish jobs market, while the Madrid blasts have renewed fear of terror attacks.

The fall-out of last Thursday's deadly blasts in Madrid is expected to be a market focus amid uncertainty over who was responsible, and it could be an issue for the US Federal Reserve when it meets on today.

"Markets are nervous after the disappointing payrolls numbers and the terrorist attack in Madrid, which will hit sentiment," said Lena Komileva, global economist at Prebon Marshall Yamane in London. "The market will be looking for signs that the Fed will be prudent with monetary policy."

The Fed is not expected to lift rates until it sees substantial improvement in employment conditions and, so far, there is little sign of that.

The latest non-farm payrolls report showed 21,000 new jobs were created in February, far short of what economists had expected.

The Fed's statement will be scrutinized for any hints on the timing of a rate rise.

Fed chief Alan Greenspan said on Thursday employment was poised to pick up.

"The important question is whether the Fed continues to say it is patient with monetary policy or whether we see another nudge in the direction of higher rates," said Investec chief economist Philip Shaw.

At its last meeting in January, the Fed caught markets off guard by stepping back from a promise to keep rates low for a "considerable period."

The Fed's key rate is at one percent.

The week's US manufacturing surveys could provide clues to the outlook for economic growth, analysts said.

A New York Fed manufacturing survey for February is due on Monday, with the Philadelphia Fed's March survey released on Thursday.

"There could be a gradual dip in the Philly Fed index, but overall the message is that the US economy is performing well," said Bank One economist Ryan Shea.

In Germany, the monthly sentiment survey from the ZEW institute was released on Tuesday.

The ZEW said its February gauge of institutional investor and analyst expectations fell to 69.9, the lowest since November, from 72.9 in January.

"The survey will give us the first steer to business sentiment in the euro zone," said Investec's Shaw. "The uninterrupted run in business confidence has come to an end and the index will be important for judging future economic trends."

In Britain, Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown takes centerstage when he delivers the budget report tomorrow.

"The general tone is likely to be one of a government committed to increasing the level of public sector services," said Bank One's Shea. "The government is facing an election in a year or so and is unlikely to back away from that commitment."

Wednesday also sees the release of February jobs data as well as the minutes from the Bank of England's meeting earlier this month.

The BOE left its key rate steady at 4 percent in March, a month after raising them.

Markets are now keen to see if members of the Monetary Policy Committee voted for a rate hike. *Reuters*

Asian stocks rebound amid global security woes

SINGAPORE—Most Asian stocks rebounded on Monday as investors chased a Wall Street rally and snapped up shares of battered exporters, putting aside suspicions that al-Qaida planted last week's bombs in Madrid.

The euro recovered after initially softening against the dollar as Spanish voters rejected their government's Iraq policy and swept the opposition Socialists to an unexpected election victory.

United States stocks bounced back on Friday from steep falls after the blasts in Spain, and bookmakers in London said a video bearing a claim that al-Qaida was responsible for the attacks that killed 200 people was unlikely to have a big impact on European markets for now.

Shares in Japan closed up 1.4 percent at 11,317.90, lifted by a 1.2 percent climb in Nissan Motor Co. and a seven percent rise in Mizuho Financial Group, Japan's biggest bank by assets.

Foreign investors showed strong appetite for selected Japanese stocks on hopes for an economic recovery, but global security woes remained, curbing aggressive buying, traders said.

An MSCI index of Asia Pacific shares ex-Japan edged up 0.4 percent, lifted by a slight rise in South Korean shares as investors took heart from government efforts to limit the impact from Friday's impeachment of President Roh Moo-hyun.

In Hong Kong, shares rose more than one percent in anticipation of strong earnings reports, especially from Chinese commodity companies, with oil firm CNOOC Ltd. up 2.4 percent ahead of its results later on Monday.

Taiwan shares bucked the overall trend to fall 2.4 percent as investors locked in profits on rising caution ahead of the March 30 presidential election.

The dollar was steady against the yen, trading around 110.92 yen.

Improved outlooks for earnings and brokerage upgrades contributed to Friday's US stock market gains, sending the Dow up 1.1 percent and the tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite 2.1 percent higher.

Investors said the US market was unlikely to react harshly to news of the suspected al-Qaida video, which threatened more attacks on US military allies.

"Although the Spanish government was reluctant to identify the perpetrators as al-Qaida, most of the capital markets had reacted last week as if it was," said John Davidson, president and chief executive of PartnerRe Asset Management.

London bookmakers expected Britain's FTSE to open five to six points higher, with Germany's DAX seen down five points to up one and France's CAC-40 tipped to fall around four points at the open. *Reuters*

Oil prices firm at $36 per barrel

SINGAPORE—Oil prices were firm above $36 a barrel for United States crude on Monday as suspicions grew that al-Qaida was behind the Madrid bombings, raising fears of future attacks.

Worries of a summer gasoline supply crunch in the United States, the world's biggest oil market, also continued to support crude, while Opec offered some mixed signals over the weekend about its future course.

US light crude prices were 20 cents higher at $36.39 a barrel at 0820 GMT, while US unleaded gasoline futures were up 0.42 cent at $1.1015 a gallon.

London Brent crude was up 30 cents at $32.54 a barrel.

US crude has bubbled above $30 for months, largely on concerns about low supplies in the United States, which guzzles more than 20 million barrels of oil a day.

A focus on falling crude stocks in the winter has diverted to worries refineries won't have enough time to build gasoline stocks to meet the peak demand summer driving season.

The looming supply crunch pushed crude and gasoline last week to one-year highs of $37.51 a barrel and $1.154 a gallon, respectively.

"The fundamentals, such as US gasoline demand and low crude inventory levels, continue to be bullish," said Tony Nunan, manager of the petroleum business at Mitsubishi Corp. in Japan.

Evidence that al-Qaida may have had a hand in the Madrid bombings last week have added to the specter of more attacks on countries that have supported the US war on terror.

The Spanish government said at the weekend it had a video tape purportedly from al-Qaida saying the group had carried out the coordinated attacks that killed 200 people in retaliation for Spain's support for the United States.

It threatened further bloodshed.

The discovery of the tape on the outskirts of Madrid followed a purported letter claiming responsibility for the blasts from the Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigades, a group that aligns itself to al-Qaida.

"The probability that the Madrid bombings were conducted by a group linked to al-Qaida is giving the market some support," said a New York broker, who declined to be identified.

Oil has also been propelled higher in recent weeks by Opec plans to cut official production by four percent from April 1 to 23.5 million barrels per day (bpd).

Adding to the bullish tone, Nigeria said Opec should raise its reference price, used to help determine production cuts or increases, above the current band of $22-$28, adding a voice to that of fellow member Venezuela.

The reference price has been above the top end of its range for every day, but one in the past four months and last stood at $31.95 a barrel.

Most Opec ministers have said the cartel that controls half the world's crude exports would go ahead with the cuts, a position reiterated by Qatar oil minister, Abdullah al Attiyah, on Monday. *Reuters*

LET YOUR FINGERS DO THE WIPING

A man wipes a model of an IP phone at the stand of United States company Cisco Systems, in preparation for the CeBit consumer electronics fair in Hanover, Germany. Billed as the world's biggest electronic fair, trade organizers will open their doors to the public this Thursday.

AP

Singapore sees growth in '04

SINGAPORE—Economists expect Singapore's economy to grow strongly in the first half of this year resulting in full-year growth of 5.5 percent in 2004.

The Monetary Authority of Singapore's latest quarterly survey of private sector expectations, released on Monday, found the median forecast for first quarter gross domestic product growth was 5.5 percent. For the April to June quarter the median forecast was for 8.3 percent growth.

The median forecast for 2004 GDP growth was slightly higher than the 5.4 percent year-on-year rise forecast in the December survey, when the economy enjoyed double-digit growth bouncing back sharply from the SARS virus outbreak.

The new forecast is at the top end of the government's official estimate of 3.5 to 5.5 percent growth for this year. *Reuters*

Japan market waits for policy decision

TOKYO—Japanese government bonds (JGB) softened on Monday as a rebound in share prices prompted traders to lock in profits ahead of a monetary policy decision by the Bank of Japan.

The market was also bracing for a 20-year bond auction due on Thursday, keeping activity at the longer end of the yield curve subdued.

"The JGB market has been firm so far," said Makoto Yamashita, senior strategist at UFJ Tsubasa Securities. "So today's rebound in share prices offered convenient opportunities for profit-taking.

Most in the market would not expect the BOJ to further ease its monetary policy when its two-day meeting ends today.

However, BOJ Governor Toshihiko Fukui has surprised the market with an unexpected easing on a few occasions since taking office almost exactly a year ago.

Some economists say another increase in the central bank's liquidity target could be possible to preempt any financial market disruptions going into the March 31 book-closing, although there should be little lasting impact on bond prices.

Traders were also keen to listen to Fukui's press conference after the policy-setting meeting.

Fukui has recently suggested he intended to keep long-term interest rates in check—a departure from the bank's traditional stance that it could only control short-term interest rates.

Fukui said last week that the BOJ's easing had helped hold down rates at the longer end of the yield curve.

The market has been nervous about oversupply as the Finance Ministry, which moved from a bimonthly schedule for 20-year bond auctions to monthly tenders in November, is due to increase issuance in this maturity in April, to 600 billion yen ($5.4 billion) a month from 500 billion.

"Given that it's almost the end of the business year, dealers will probably think twice about bidding too aggressively," said a trader at a major brokerage house. "Buying 20-year bonds at this time of the year can be tricky because prices of these long-term bonds are volatile.

He added, however, that many long-term investors, such as pension funds, still wanted to top up their holdings of higher-yielding paper after reducing their purchases late last year in the wake of a big bond market sell-off in July and August. *Reuters*

China economists want sweeping trade deal with Taiwan

BEIJING—Leading Chinese economists want a sweeping trade deal with Taiwan.

But the economists argue that an agreement will be meaningless unless the island accepts direct transportation links with the mainland, according to state media Monday.

The economists said the pact should be molded after China's Closer Economic Partnership Agreement (Cepa) with Hong Kong.

The agreement grants zero tariff treatment to hundreds of Hong Kong products, the China Business Weekly reported.

"Personally, I think the trade deal has to be inked by the end of this year," said Zhang Hanlin, a professor at the University of International Business and Economics.

The call from the trade experts came just days before presidential elections on Taiwan, which China fears could push the island further towards independence from the mainland.

Analysts and officials on the mainland have often argued that closer economic integration will help draw the island closer to China following 55 years of separation.

An agreement with Taiwan should also emulate the Cepa deal in granting greater access to the mainland market for Taiwan service industries, the newspaper quoted trade experts as saying.

This is necessary in order to ensure that Taiwan companies can be served by the same institutions, such as banks and insurers, that they also deal with at home, the analysts argued.

The Cepa deal, which also covers Macau, has been implemented since early this year.

Time is of the essence because Taiwan investors on the mainland are now finding themselves at a disadvantage, argued Zhang Hanwen, director of a Taiwan merchant association in south China's Dongguan city.

"The Cepa agreements have given many privileges to Hong Kong and Macau companies, which means there are now greater challenges for Taiwan companies," Zhang told the newspaper.

But for an agreement to be signed, Taiwan will have to allow direct trade, transportation and postal services, known as the "three links," the trade experts said.

"Without the free flow of people, it will basically be out of the question," said Zhang, the trade professor.

Taiwan has banned full direct exchanges with the mainland since the two sides split in 1949 at the end of a civil war, despite booming travel and trade across the strait through third parties such as Hong Kong. *AFP*

The Testimonial Dinner and Awards Night that we hold annually for the cream of our agency force has become one of our time-honored traditions. Indeed it is a most fitting way to honor those of you who worked very hard last year to achieve your goals. You are truly the pillars of our sales force.

I enjoin you to continue the noble work you have successfully started and to carry on Insular Life's tradition of service to your respective communities. May you be the inspiration of your colleagues and a model of the stature that can be achieved in this profession.

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Chairman of the Board &
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This is a special occasion, for today we honor our top performers. Your inclusion in our roster of achievers is doubly significant as it speaks not just of success in your personal pursuit of excellence but also of successful selling amidst trying market conditions.

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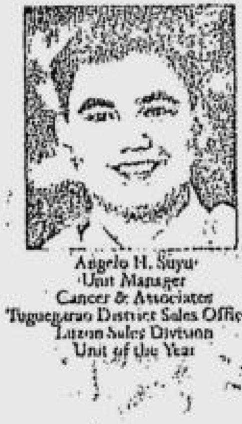

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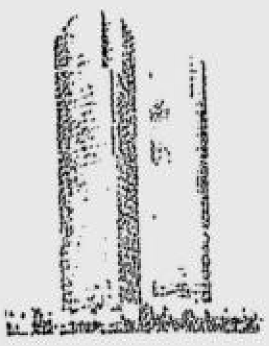

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REALESTATE

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Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

PEDESTRIAN PARADISE

Ayala 'transplants' a suburb to The Fort

By Tessa R. Salazar

WITH HECTARES upon hectares of open spaces, themed gardens with fruit orchards, herb and flower patches, courtyards, lush landscaping, canopy trees and wide garden areas surrounding your home, and an underground parking for cars, what do you get?

A quiet suburban sanctuary, transplanted to The Fort.

Ayala Land Inc. and its subsidiary Community Innovations Inc. have agreed to build on the first phase of its wide-scale residential development dubbed as Serendra on ALI's 12-hectare property at the Bonifacio Global City.

About 7.5 hectares of the whole 12-hectare development are set to be dedicated for open spaces. This translates to roughly 65 percent of lush greenery and intimate garden areas.

A TASTE of European residential villages designed with curvilinear and multilevel layouts

Need for breathing space

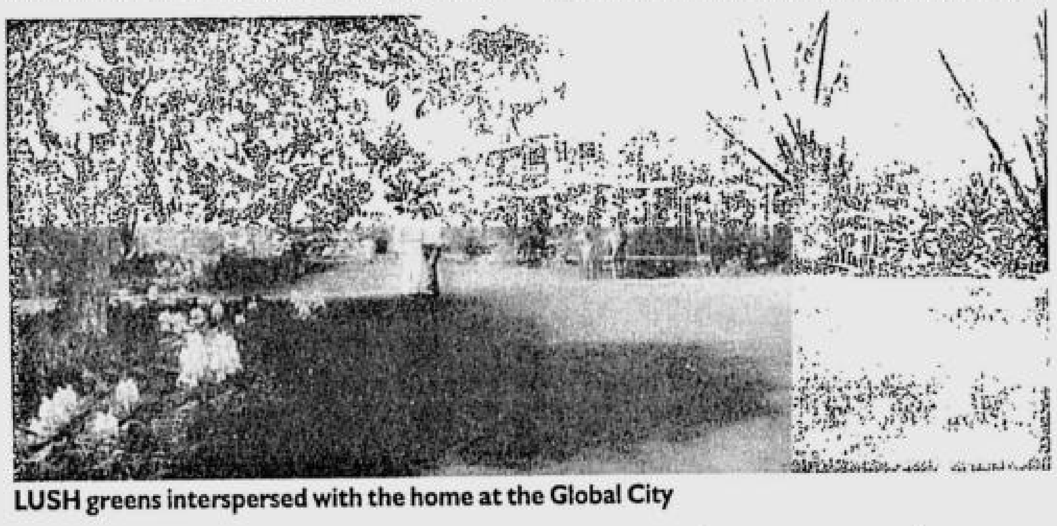
Community Innovations president Angela De Villa Lacson said it is not profitable to dedicate such a large amount of space for a residential development but ALI decided to do that to address a specific need for breathing space in areas like Makati.

ALI senior division manager Loy Umali said the roads are not yet included in the 65-percent open space. "Compare this to a typical subdivision that only retains 50 percent of open space including the roads."

The first phase consisting of 586 units will be developed on a 3.5-hectare land.

Large tract of open spaces

To picture how wide the first phase of residential units will be in terms of open spaces, ALI senior manager for residential building Kate Ilagan demonstrated how a typical 4,000 square meters can be occupied by two buildings or two high-rise towers (with 500 to 600 units in the Makati central business district), and then compared it with a low- to medium-rise building with 586 units on 3.5 hectares.



LUSH greens interspersed with the home at the Global City

It is not profitable to dedicate such a large amount of space for a residential development but Ayala Land decided to do that to address a specific need for breathing space in areas like Makati

Ilagan added that not even an open garden of a posh subdivision could match the large tract of open spaces set for the residents of Serendra.

Serendra, said Lacson, is connected to major arteries leading to Quezon City, Alabang and Ortigas. It is even accessible to schools on Katipunan Avenue, the international airports and Pasig via C5, Edsa and South Luzon expressway. It is also in close proximity to international schools.

The first phase, which is in the preselling stage, is scheduled for completion in three years.

"Certain sections of the property will not be excavated to allow trees to grow. Construction will be done one at a time so that existing trees will not die," said Lacson.

Condo units

Unit sizes to be built for District 1 will range from 68 sq m for a typical one bedroom to 187 sq m for a special three-bedroom unit. Those for District 2 will range from a 40-sq-m studio to a 97-sq-m three-bedroom unit.

With low- to mid-rise terraced sections in its first few phases, it will gradually spiral to taller sections in later phases in the 12-hectare property.

Amenities include day-care center, function rooms, social hall, veranda, swimming pools, children's play area and library area, fitness center, covered basketball and badminton courts, game rooms, lawn area and themed gardens.

Building features include the commercial Promenade area at the center of the housing development. This is set to combine residential and themed retail sections and will connect Serendra to the Global City Center and Market! Market!, which will be located just across the street.

Residents and guests will have basement parking slots, pedestrian bridgeway connections between retail portions, centralized sanitary disposal, mail room, 24-hour security and buildings to be maintained by the Ayala Property Management Corp.

"The floor area ratio limit for the development is substantially lower than the maximum, almost 50 percent lower than the allowable limit," said Umali.

More density

He added that everything was studied. "In the master plan of the Fort Bonifacio, planners are providing for more density."

Ayala Land dispatched a team to visit developments in Europe and the United States for several months to make them study firsthand projects with low densities and lots of open spaces.

Then it picked Santa Monica-based architectural firm Moore Ruble Yudell because of its known handling of densities in developments, open spaces, curvilinear and winding buildings. Moore Ruble Yudell helped pick a landscape architect to collaborate with the team.

ALI considered technical aspects such as experience in designing in the tropics and familiarity with the plant types to be used.

Building architects tapped by ALI are longtime partners BF and Partners and RMJM. ALI chose Andy Locsin to create the Asian and Filipino theme for the buildings, particularly the traditional bahay-na-bato theme.

Choosing the right window

BUILDING DREAMS

By Alexis A. Acacio, Ph.D.

ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY MISTADES

THE WINDOW makes the home. This is what most people say. With the abundant choices of construction materials, owners and designers are sometimes confused on the choices that are available. Product manufacturers are sometimes short on detailing the advantages as well as the disadvantages of a certain type of window over another. During the past year, many of our readers have asked about the various options when it comes to choosing windows. I hope that it will guide our homeowners on the type of window to use.

Function

The windows of a house are the most critical components when it comes to ventilation and lighting. Large windows, when oriented in the correct way, can provide more than enough ventilation to efficiently cool a home. When exterior air is allowed to come in and exit freely in a home, the result is a well-ventilated home. On the negative end, small and inefficient windows can make a house very warm in hot weather and very dark even when the sun is shining.

Natural light also has to come in throughout the windows although there are other means to get natural lighting such as glass blocks, skylights and concrete vents. A big window can allow light to get in and can make it bright at every corner throughout the day.

Choices

There is an abundant supply of windows and the common types are made of:

- **Steel**—A favorite of many developers, steel windows are practical in the sense that these provide security at the same time. This is one of the common types because of its ease of fabrication and installation.
- **Wood**—A favorite in old homes, they can give a lot of native look into your home. There are in fact century-old homes with wooded windows that are still intact and functioning as new. If you would decide on a wooded type of window, make sure that it is adequately treated and prepared for exposure to termites and the elements.
- **PVC**—Plastic-based windows are becoming popular these days for they provide a rustproof and termite-free material. These types come in single or double glazed windows that provide very good insulation characteristics. They are however more expensive than the other types.
- **Aluminum**—Commonly used as sliding windows, aluminum-based window frames are precut at the fabrication yard and then assembled and installed at the site. They come in a variety of colors and you may simply select them from a color chart. The more common ones are the anodized type or the analok types. Powder-coated types can be fabricated for various colors.
- **New materials**—There are still other windows that are made of new material and they are slowly inching their way into the market.

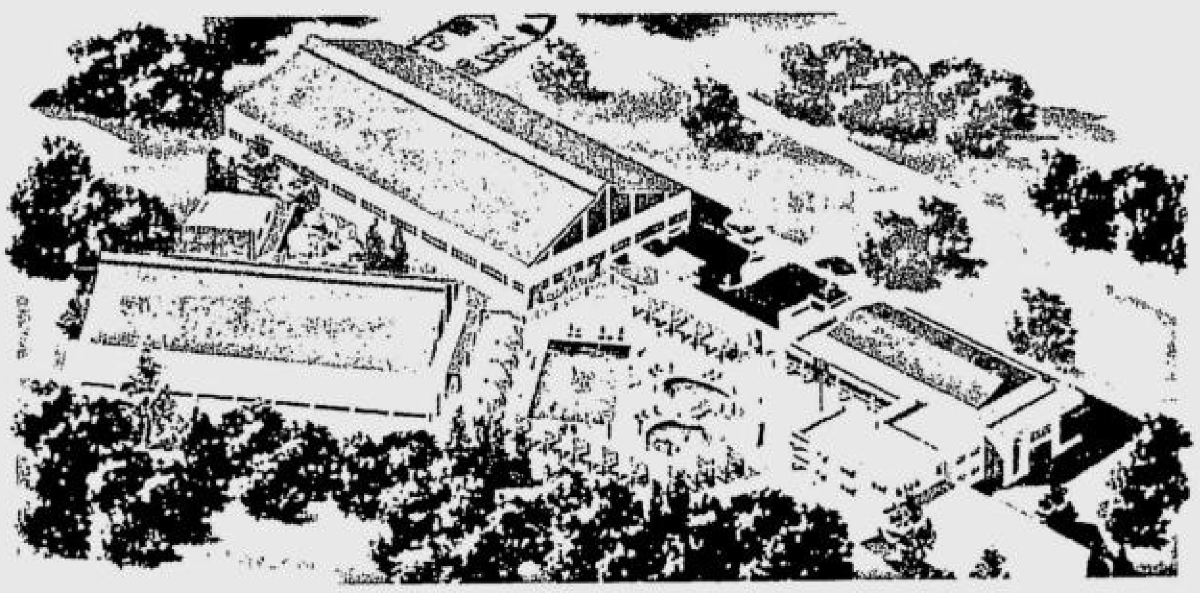
Important features

In selecting windows for your home, you may want to check the following features:

- **Durability**—The window that you should use should be durable enough to stand the all year weather. If your house is in a cold mountain region, then make sure that it would not rust and rot because of the constant moisture that it is being exposed to. If you are building a beach house, then your steel windows should be adequately rust protected or better yet, use another material.
- **Cost**—A certain type of window is more expensive than another so it really depends on your budget.
- **Energy efficiency**—The window should keep you cool during summer and warm during cold weather.
- **Fire escape**—Many fire victims have died due to the absence of fire escapes. So make sure that for every room of the house, there should be an escape route in case your home catches fire if the unfortunate event of a fire happens to your home.

Final Note. One actually has a wide range of choices when it comes to the windows that are to be installed in your home. Each one has advantages as well as disadvantages over another. The type of window that best suits a house is dependent on many factors such as the architectural theme, color, location and orientation, and it is always best to consult your designer and design professional regarding this matter.

E-mail the author at aaacacio@pacific.net.ph.



THE VILLAGE Sports Club

Bringing affordable recreation to a progressive neighborhood

RESIDENTS of BF Homes in Southern Metro Manila will soon benefit from a new addition to their neighborhood. All set to bring quality recreation practically to their doorstep is The Village Sports Club, an exclusive leisure complex that offers a wide range of sports, dining and event facilities on an expansive 1.8-hectare property.

The Village Sports Club enjoys a central location within BF Homes, Las Piñas, considered one of the largest private subdivisions in Asia with over 10,000 households. With no reasonably priced sports clubs in the vicinity, Narel Realty and Development Corp. saw the potential of tapping this unanswered need through a sports club that will cater not only to village residents but to the nearby Parañaque and Muntinlupa areas as well. NRDC president and CEO Christian Relova and vice president Christopher Narciso agree that The Village Sports Club is a project whose time has come.

Quite unique

Narciso explains that the way the club was conceptualized is quite unique. "Normally, a sports or country club is developed to entice lot owners to build homes and have the community grow. In this case, we already have a very large and mature community without a comprehensive sports and recreational facility to cater to them," he says.

With shares priced significantly lower than other clubs, The Village Sports Club does not scrimp on quality. It will have the latest sports facilities at par with other more expensive clubs. Members can enjoy badminton, basketball, bowling, squash, swimming, tennis, rock climbing, jogging and even boxing.

Social hub

The club is also destined to become a social hub with the well-appointed dining and function outlets. Every member of the family will surely enjoy the pleasant, laid-back village atmosphere that the club intends to cultivate. "We envision this to be a place where your family can go to enjoy the food and facilities without worrying about the budget," says Relova.

In addition to being a venue to spend quality time, The Village Sports Club also makes a good investment. It is the most affordable club in its class in Southern Metro Manila, with only a predetermined number of club shares to be sold to maintain a comfortable ratio between the active members and the available facilities. This also guarantees the appreciation of club shares in the years to come. "Besides, anything that contributes to building a healthy lifestyle for you and your family is a very good investment," adds Narciso.

The first phase of construction is scheduled upon hitting sales of 800 shares. This is to ensure that the cost of development is entirely covered. "The response to the project was overwhelming and has exceeded our projections," says Relova. "At the rate we are going, we expect to ground break by September 2004 and be operational one year after."

Value for money

The Village Sports Club is the first leisure development venture of the Narel Group of Companies, which has established its name as a builder of quality houses. Narciso explains the rationale behind the deviation from its core business: "Necessity is the mother of all inventions. We personally felt the need for an affordable yet complete sports and recreational facility in the BF Homes area.

"Knowing how hard life is these days, people are more value-for-money conscious," adds Relova. "This is what actually led us to housing and now our expansion into leisure development. If this proves to be a success, we plan to replicate it in other communities as well."

The Village Sports Club is indeed a timely development in BF Homes; one that is sure to change the lifestyle and leisure habits of entire households. Aside from making the most of a good business opportunity, the project takes on a personal dimension for NRDC's prime movers.

Ace Builders Center opens in SM Pampanga

ACE, a brand associated with quality hardware products and services, recently opened its first builders center at SM City Pampanga. This one-stop shop for building and home improvement needs was conceptualized to cater to the needs of contractors and do-it-yourself (DIY) enthusiasts in creating the ideal home.

The new Ace Builders Center is a construction-type depot with an area of 4,500 square meters. It was designed to give a pleasurable shopping experience to customers who are building or remodeling homes.

Each section is well categorized, providing easy access to every item.

Completing the shopping experience are the Ace Hardware items well loved by DIY enthusiasts. And being part of the Ace family, the store has knowledgeable and professional sales persons, who are more than willing to attend to your product inquiries and needs.

The Ace Builders Center also offers shopping convenience through loading and pickup stations and large parking spaces.

FOR NEXT ADMINISTRATION

Developers reveal 10-point agenda

By Charles E. Buban

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

COME June 30, the country will either be ushering in a new administration or have allowed the incumbent to get another mandate.

But whoever he or she may be, the country's real estate developers nationwide are prepared to forward their housing agenda to the coming administration so that whatever gains they have made in the past years will not be diminished.

"Even now, we are urging all presidential candidates to consider mass housing a major part of their respective platforms and agenda," says Subdivision and Housing Developers Association chair Jesus Atencio.

Atencio, who is also president of Firm Builders Realty Development Corp., believes that housing sector should be viewed as an indispensable tool for economic growth, and the most effective means of social intervention.

4M housing backlog

Government and private sector estimates show the country's housing backlog still stands at 4 million.

This means the country has a lot of catching up to do: around 700,000 units a year for the next 20 years to meet a population growth rate of 2.4 percent a year.

"And with the elections happening in May, developers are asking: is there life after elections? The sector is quite worried and the candidates need to assure them," Atencio says.

10-point agenda

With this in mind, SHDA proposes the following housing agenda that the coming administration may consider:

1. Activate the secondary mortgage market system to ensure long-term home mortgage financing.
2. Institutionalize partnerships between developers and financing institutions through developers' risk-sharing guarantee schemes.
3. Prioritize housing in the national land use framework and speed up the updating of Comprehensive Land Use Plans by local government units (LGUs).
4. Stamp out and prosecute squatting syndicates.
5. Pursue mass housing programs at the LGU level by encouraging joint ventures with private developers.
6. Support rental housing by LGUs to combat urban blight and squatting.
7. Simplify rules, permits, requirements and signatories for housing project applications, especially those required by the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board, Department of Agrarian Reform, Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the LGUs.
8. Encourage long-term supply agreements between developers' groups and manufacturers of basic construction materials to stabilize prices.
9. Promote responsible homeownership by educating homeowners regarding on-time payments of their monthly amortization.
10. Extend fiscal and other incentives to encourage private banks and other financial institutions to participate in developmental loan activities and provide longer terms for end-user housing loans.

Atencio believes that with these 10 points, it is expected that the coming administration can encourage the sector to deliver more housing units and to fill in the country's continuously deteriorating housing backlog."

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Asia's largest construction trade exhibit opens

TODAY, all roads lead to the World Trade Center and the Philippine Trade and Training Center for the opening of Asia's largest and ultimate construction trade exhibit—The World Building and Construction Exposition or Worldbex 2004.

The first three days of the construction trade exhibit are open to architects, interior designers, contractors, developers, engineers and prospective agents who seek to gain important tips straight from experts and see the latest products and services in the construction industry.

The public and students are all welcome to visit Worldbex 2004 on March 19 and 20. Admission is free.

Worldbex 2004 will promote anew products and services from countries such as Australia, Malaysia, Korea, China, Taiwan, France, US, Europe, New Zealand, Canada, Germany and UK.

"This year's expo is going to be even better than last year, occupying the World Trade Center and the adjoining Philippine Trade and Training Center. Worldbex will also hold the first-ever "Gayak Pilipino" which will feature the country's top architects and interior designers," shared Joseph Ang, founding chair of Worldbex Services International, the event organizer.

With the theme Filipino Asian, "Gayak Pilipino" is a 550-square-meter house designed by no less than architect Delfin Viola III with the interiors designed and executed separately by the top luminaries in the field: Gerry Contreras, Johnny Hubilla, Suzette Cocuaco, Leo Almeria, Angeles Gonzalez-Hager, Arlen de Guzman, Songsong + Periquet, and Benny Marasigan.

In addition, also featured is the Architect's Gallery, which showcases the masterpieces of the country's leading architects.

In line with Worldbex 2004, the 6th Worldbex seminars on March 17 and 18 are featuring renowned international speakers who will share their knowledge with the local professionals. This is the much-awaited seminar in the industry that happens only once a year.

Water, power conservation sale promo

REDUCING energy consumption does not only stretch the worth of your hard-earned peso but also helps protect the environment.

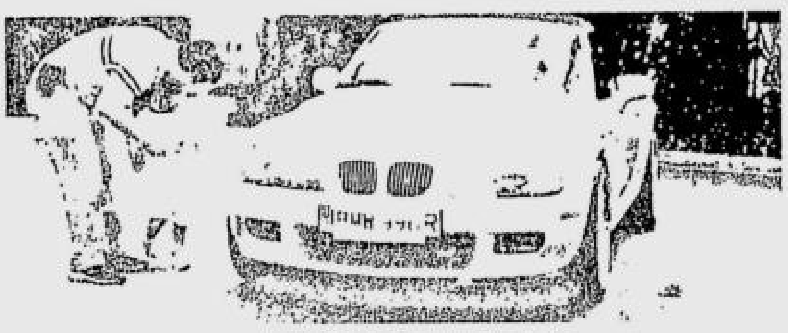
GE's environmental, health and safety engineer Andrew Interino says that since electricity generation produces pollution, reducing energy consumption can significantly lessen pollution over the long term.

There are basic ways to save on energy like turning off lamps when not in use. Unplugging appliances when not in use is also safer and helps reduce consumption.

Interino suggests cleaning lamps or bulbs to attain their full brightness. Using energy efficient lamps like GE's CFL and fluorescent lamps and energy ballasts is also consumption.

One can likewise maximize the use of electrical appliances to save on energy. When buying refrigerators, look at its EER (Energy Efficient Ratio). "The higher the number, the more efficient it is," he says. Using power-on delay adaptors is advisable. This prevents your appliances from breaking down due to sudden fluctuations and upsurge of power due to power interruptions.

And since power consumption rises during summer, switch to alternatives to cool down. Go to the malls in the afternoon when the temperature rises at home or just go out of the house or the garden. Open windows and avoid the use of long curtains so air can easily flow in and out. Set your air-con's thermostat at middle level and just increase the fan level to 2 or 3, suggests Handyman's project engineering manager, Fer Gonzales.



BMWs were used to let guests see the scenic spots at Westgrove Heights.

Discovering Westgrove Heights through BMW

IT WAS an energetic day for sightseeing and exploring last Feb. 22. Ayala Land Inc.'s joint event with Autohaus BMW, "Cruising the Grove," gave visitors a chance to discover Ayala Westgrove Heights using some of the latest models from the world-renowned car company. The exclusive, high-end subdivision was the "site" to see during the daylong event, while guests were allowed to test-drive vehicles that give sheer driving pleasure along prearranged paths.

Scenic spots

The route started from Ayala Westgrove Height's Main Clubhouse, and continued through scenic parts of its six phases. It was traversed by several BMW cars—the 316i, 318i and 525i sedans.

Spots of interest were highlighted in the route, including the Kidsgrove Clubhouse, the newly launched 3B-2 Phase along Magnolia Row, the Photo Stop at the village entrance, and the Central Park. These were seen in succession with the help of the sleek dream automobiles.

Ayala Westgrove Heights' site officers have been very accommodating tour guides for the day. They share that this exciting opportunity has been beneficial for everyone concerned. Ayala Westgrove Heights is made more known to the public, and at the same time, BMW is able to do the same for its products.

Guests were able to appreciate AWH's amenities and the available lots of even the new phase along Magnolia Row, because of this special partnership.

2 luxurious names

According to preowned sales executive Vic Tankeh of Autohaus BMW Philippines (the authorized local dealer of the vehicles), the potential purchasers will be delighted to sample two luxurious and highly regarded names in a single event.

"Cruising the Grove" was attended by a considerable number of prospective lot buyers and car enthusiasts, who have continuously arrived from 9 a.m. until shortly before the occasion wrapped up at around 4 p.m. Enthusiastic visitors were exposed to Ayala Westgrove Heights' over 400 hectares of expansive greenery, and quality amenities that address residents' every recreational need. For them, riding the exquisite vehicles made the cruising even more pleasurable and memorable.

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Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late RIZALINO V. FRIAS, JR an extrajudicial deed of partition and settlement among heirs with waiver of rights was executed and denominated as per Doc. No. 271; Page No. 55; Book No. 398; Series of 2004 Notarized by Lucila M. Lawas of Yutok Pasig City
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Lot 31 - LOT ONLY
LA 1,166sqm
LOT 1474, COR. IPIL IPIL & BRGY. ROAD, CALIBUNGAN
Min. Bid Price PhP100,000.00

Lot 32 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 141sqm FA 88sqm
LOT 2402-A-5, SAN AMBROSIO ST., SAN GAVINO
Min. Bid Price PhP122,000.00

Lot 33 - LOT ONLY
LA 2,000sqm
LOTS 2 & 3, RAIZ ST., SAN FERNANDO
Min. Bid Price PhP1,289,000.00

Lot 34 - LOT ONLY
LA 16,007sqm
LOT 215, SAN FRANCISCO
Min. Bid Price PhP1,896,000.00

Lot 35 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 20,617sqm FA 4698sqm
LOTS 681-A, 681-B, 681-C & 681-D, ALONG VICTORIA-PURA PROVINCIAL ROAD, BRGY. BANGAR
Min. Bid Price PhP2,988,000.00

LAPAZ

Lot 36 - LOT ONLY
LA 585sqm
LOT 3 BLK 1, SNR. DE LA PAZ SUBD. SAN ISIDRO
Min. Bid Price PhP100,000.00

Lot 37 - LOT ONLY
LA 656sqm
LOT 2 BLK 3, SNR. DE LA PAZ SUBD., SAN ISIDRO
Min. Bid Price PhP112,000.00

Lot 38 - LOT ONLY
LA 652sqm
LOT 1 BLK 3, SNR. DE LA PAZ SUBD., SAN ISIDRO
Min. Bid Price PhP139,000.00

Lot 39 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 800sqm FA 78sqm
LOT 3 BLK 16, #447 SONZA AVE., BRGY. COMILLAS
Min. Bid Price PhP150,000.00

Lot 40 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 763sqm FA 202sqm
LOT 9 BLK 24, SONZA ST., COMILLAS
Min. Bid Price PhP187,000.00

Lot 41 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 800sqm FA 146sqm
LOT 7 BLK 10, SONZA AVE., BRGY. COMILLAS
Min. Bid Price PhP390,000.00

Lot 42 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 1,196sqm FA 48sqm
LOT 9 BLK 23, SONZA ST., BRGY. COMILLAS
Min. Bid Price PhP476,000.00

Lot 43 - LOT ONLY
LA 2,389sqm
LOT 2067, BRGY. MATAYUMTAYUM
Min. Bid Price PhP163,000.00

Lot 44 - LOT ONLY
LA 3,228sqm
LOT 2068, BRGY. MATAYUMTAYUM
Min. Bid Price PhP220,000.00

Lot 45 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 789sqm FA 115sqm
LOT 2301-A BRGY. MATAYUMTAYUM
Min. Bid Price PhP314,000.00

CONCEPCION

Lot 46 - LOT ONLY
LA 3,293sqm
LOT 1 BLK 6, PINEDA ORCHARD, BRGY. STO. NINO
Min. Bid Price PhP173,000.00

Lot 47 - LOT ONLY
LA 1,148sqm
LOT 128-A-6, PINEDA ORCHARD, BRGY. STO. NINO
Min. Bid Price PhP586,000.00

Lot 48 - LOT ONLY
LA 1,670sqm
LOT 1 BLK 1, PINEDA ORCHARD, BRGY. STO. NINO
Min. Bid Price PhP752,000.00

Lot 49 - LOT ONLY
LA 1,982sqm
LOT 3 BLK 3, PINEDA ORCHARD, BRGY. STO. NINO
Min. Bid Price PhP892,000.00

Lot 50 - LOT ONLY
LA 18,475sqm
LOT 128-A-7, PINEDA ORCHARD, BRGY. STO. NINO
Min. Bid Price PhP943,000.00

Lot 51 - LOT ONLY
LA 2,385sqm
LOT 4 BLK 3, PINEDA ORCHARD, BRGY. STO. NINO
Min. Bid Price PhP1,074,000.00

Lot 52 - LOT ONLY
LA 2,439sqm
LOT 2 BLK 1, PINEDA ORCHARD BRGY. STO. NINO
Min. Bid Price PhP1,098,000.00

Lot 53 - LOT ONLY
LA 2,496sqm
LOT 3 BLK 1, PINEDA ORCHARD, BRGY. STO. NINO
Min. Bid Price PhP1,123,000.00

CAPAS

Lot 54 - LOT ONLY
LA 2,306sqm
LOT 3-C-3, MANIPON CMPD., STO DOMINGO, CAPAS
Min. Bid Price PhP399,000.00

SAN JOSE

Lot 55 - LOT ONLY
LA 1,606sqm
LOT 19-A, BRGY. LAWACAMULAG
Min. Bid Price PhP168,000.00

Lot 56 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 1,004sqm FA 75sqm
LOT 6035-A, BRGY. VILLA AGLIPAY
Min. Bid Price PhP258,000.00

TARLAC CITY

Lot 57 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 210sqm
LOT 4019-A-1, INTERIOR ESPINOSA ST., BRGY. SAPANG MARAGUL
Min. Bid Price PhP84,000.00

Lot 58 - LOT ONLY
LA 535sqm
LOT 52, SITIO KUMINTANG, SAPANG MARAGUL
Min. Bid Price PhP137,000.00

Lot 59 - LOT ONLY
LA 540sqm
LOT 53, SITIO KUMINTANG, SAPANG MARAGUL
Min. Bid Price PhP138,000.00

Lot 60 - LOT ONLY
LA 550sqm
LOT 54, SITIO KUMINTANG, SAPANG MARAGUL
Min. Bid Price PhP141,000.00

Lot 61 - LOT ONLY
LA 367sqm
L12, BLK 5, BRGY. AGUSO, STA. CRUZ
Min. Bid Price PhP63,000.00

Lot 62 - LOT ONLY
LA 367sqm
L14, BLK 5, BRGY. AGUSO, STA. CRUZ
Min. Bid Price PhP63,000.00

Lot 63 - LOT ONLY
LA 202sqm
LOT 10 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP69,000.00

Lot 64 - LOT ONLY
LA 203sqm
LOT 16 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP69,000.00

Lot 65 - LOT ONLY
LA 206sqm
LOT 8 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP70,000.00

Lot 66 - LOT ONLY
LA 204sqm
LOT 9 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP70,000.00

Lot 67 - LOT ONLY
LA 205sqm
LOT 17 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP70,000.00

Lot 68 - LOT ONLY
LA 207sqm
LOT 11 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP71,000.00

Lot 69 - LOT ONLY
LA 208sqm
LOT 15 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP71,000.00

Lot 70 - LOT ONLY
LA 207sqm
LOT 18 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP71,000.00

Lot 71 - LOT ONLY
LA 208sqm
LOT 19 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP71,000.00

Lot 72 - LOT ONLY
LA 237sqm
LOT 13 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP81,000.00

Lot 73 - LOT ONLY
LA 228sqm
LOT 14 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP88,000.00

Lot 74 - LOT ONLY
LA 231sqm
LOT 12 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP89,000.00

Lot 75 - LOT ONLY
LA 768sqm
LOT 12 BLK 4, SALVADOR SUBD., SITIO MALIGAYA, BRGY. AGUSO
Min. Bid Price PhP131,000.00

Lot 76 - LOT ONLY
LA 789sqm
LOT 13 BLK 4, SALVADOR SUBD., SITIO MALIGAYA, BRGY. AGUSO
Min. Bid Price PhP135,000.00

Lot 77 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 1,000sqm FA 63sqm
LOT 5-A-A, BRGY. STO. NINO, TARLAC
Min. Bid Price PhP181,000.00

Lot 78 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 1,220sqm
LOT 4808, SAN JUAN DE MATA
Min. Bid Price PhP124,000.00

Lot 79 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 585sqm FA 74sqm
LOT 4792-B-1, BRGY. SAN JUAN DE MATA
Min. Bid Price PhP157,000.00

Lot 80 - LOT ONLY
LA 1,014sqm
LOT 5, BRGY. SAN JUAN DE MATA
Min. Bid Price PhP191,000.00

Lot 81 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 515sqm FA 66sqm
LOT 4831-C, PUROK HAPPY VALLEY, SAN JUAN DE MATA
Min. Bid Price PhP200,000.00

Lot 82 - LOT ONLY
LA 2,703sqm
LOTS 1, 2, 3, 4 & 4790-B, BRGY. SAN JUAN DE MATA
Min. Bid Price PhP290,000.00

Lot 83 - LOT ONLY
LA 13,633sqm
LOT 5, BRGY. STA. CRUZ
Min. Bid Price PhP409,000.00

Lot 84 - LOT ONLY
LA 344sqm
LOT 43, MACARTHUR HIWAY, STA. CRUZ
Min. Bid Price PhP205,000.00

Lot 85 - LOT ONLY
LA 240sqm
LOT 43-B, SAN VICENTE HILLS SUBD., SAN VICENTE
Min. Bid Price PhP252,000.00

Lot 86 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 188sqm FA 88sqm
LOT 18 BLK 3, CADENA DE AMOR ST CAPITOL SUBD., SAN VICENTE
Min. Bid Price PhP350,000.00

Lot 87 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 240sqm FA 150sqm
LOT 1 BLK 8, FAIRLANE SUBD., SAN VICENTE
Min. Bid Price PhP452,000.00

Lot 88 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 622sqm FA 70sqm
LOTS 43-C & 43-D, SAN VICENTE HILLS SUBD., SAN VICENTE
Min. Bid Price PhP515,000.00

Lot 89 - LOT ONLY
LA 851sqm
LOTS 7, 8, 9, 10, & 11, BLOCK 1, BRGY. SAN VICENTE
Min. Bid Price PhP798,000.00

Lot 90 - LOT ONLY
LA 1,025sqm
LOT 108-A, SITIO KUMINTANG, SAPANG MARAGUL
Min. Bid Price PhP262,000.00

Lot 91 - LOT ONLY
LA 6,918sqm
LOT 9370-A, PUROK 6, SAPANG MARAGUL
Min. Bid Price PhP370,000.00

Lot 92 - LOT ONLY
LA 14,260sqm
LOT 4033, PARAISO COR MEDINA STS., SAPANG MARAGUL
Min. Bid Price PhP375,000.00

Lot 93 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 606sqm FA 185sqm
LOTS 3992-B & 3992-C, BRGY. SAPANG MARAGUL
Min. Bid Price PhP804,000.00

Lot 94 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 240sqm FA 38sqm
LOT 7 BLK 11, BACUIT, SAPANG MARAGUL, TARLAC
Min. Bid Price PhP47,000.00

Lot 95 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 1,306sqm FA 108sqm
LOT 3135-C, # 204 & 205, BRGY. ALVINDIA
Min. Bid Price PhP416,000.00

Lot 96 - LOT ONLY
LA 302sqm
LOT 23 BLK 1, WALING WALING ST., LAZATIN SUBDIVISION, SAN ROQUE
Min. Bid Price PhP431,000.00

Lot 97 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 538sqm FA 180sqm
LOT 13 BLK 6, 424 3RD STREET PARADISE SUBD., SAN ROQUE
Min. Bid Price PhP1,617,000.00

Lot 98 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 978sqm FA 25sqm
LOT 9 BLK 2, ALONG ROMULO HIWAY STA. IGNACIA
Min. Bid Price PhP452,000.00

Lot 99 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 4,685sqm FA (various)
LOTS 1-A-2, 1-A-3, 1-A-4, 1-A-3-B & 1068-A, ROMULO HIWAY, POB. EAST STA IGNACIA
Min. Bid Price PhP3,522,000.00

Lot 100 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 270sqm FA 94sqm
LOT 11 BLK 9, STO. DOMINGO II, CAPAS
Min. Bid Price PhP492,000.00

Lot 101 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 224sqm FA 144sqm
LOT A, BLK 1, BRGY. SAN MANUEL
Min. Bid Price PhP500,000.00

Lot 102 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 240sqm FA 68sqm
LOT 7 BLK 53, SAN SEBASTIAN VILLAGE, PHASE III, BINAUGANAN
Min. Bid Price PhP606,000.00

Lot 103 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 4,176sqm FA 140sqm
LOT 2-B-1 SITIO MOLAVE, BRGY. SAN ISIDRO
Min. Bid Price PhP863,000.00

Lot 104 - LOT ONLY
LA 194sqm
LOT 484, #622 F. TANEDO ST., SAN NICOLAS
Min. Bid Price PhP2,969,000.00

Lot 105 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 1,591sqm FA 32sqm
LOT 2, MAC ARTHUR HIWAY, SAN RAFAEL
Min. Bid Price PhP7,196,000.00

Lot 106 - LOT ONLY
LA 2,732sqm
LOT 2-F-1-E, HAPPY HILLS SUBD., CARANGIAN
Min. Bid Price PhP1,025,000.00

Lot 107 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 345sqm FA 214sqm
LOT 1, #0576-439 PROVINCIAL ROAD, ARANGUREN
Min. Bid Price PhP1,176,000.00

Lot 108 - LOT ONLY
LA 5,060sqm
LOTS 2576-B-2-A, C & B, MCARTHUR HIGHWAY, SEPUNG CALSADA
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"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me will never die." John 11:25-26

Hon. Manuel "Maning" Pineda Dumatol

(Retired Judge)

V. Mapa High School Class 1949- Salutatorian
UP Law Class 1955 – Cum Laude

Died in the Grace of our Lord on March 9, 2004 at the age of 72.

His bereaved wife **Lody** (nee **Salvador**); children **Noli & Citas, Edwin, Jolyn & Ed, Jennifer & Viven**; and grandchildren **Alyssa, AJ, Nico, Nash, Neil, Hans, Bea & Sai**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on March 17, 2004 after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God" Matthew 5:9

The Missionary Society of Saint Columban
mourns the death of

MSGR. PATRICK DESMOND HARTFORD

who died at St. Columban's, Navan, Ireland on March 13, 2004 at the age of 60.

Fr. Des Hartford was ordained in Dublin on December 20, 1967 and came to the Philippines the following year. His first assignment was to Mambajao on Camiguin Island and later to Pagadian City where he became parish priest. In 1977, after thorough discernment, he volunteered for the newly erected Prelature of Marawi and inspired by the leadership of Bishop Bienvenido Tudtud, dedicated his life to Christian-Muslim dialogue. Fr. Des was elected to the General Council of the Society of St. Columban in 1988 for a six-year term. However, at the request of the Holy See, he became the Apostolic Administrator of Marawi Prelature in 1991, an office he held until 2001. He responded to this challenging mission with great generosity, even during the dark episode of being taken hostage. He remained a faithful advocate of Inter-Religious Dialogue and a member of the Bishops-Ulama Conference. At the onset of serious illness he returned to Ireland in 2002 showing once again his courage and serenity as a man of prayer and peace.

A Requiem Mass for Msgr. Des Hartford will be held in Malate Catholic Church on Thursday, 18th March at 4:30 P.M.

May he rest in peace.

SOLEDAD HILARIO VILLANUEVA

*Peacefully joined our Creator and her husband **Pantaleon** on March 11, 2004 at the age of 84.*

Her children **ROGER & EMY**; grandsons **DEANE, MERVIN & ROEMEL**; niece and nephew **LINA & NESTY**; grandnephews **ERWIN & ERIC**; relatives and friends request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Alvarez Funeral Home, Lopez Jaena St., Cavite City.

Interment will be today, March 16, 2004 at Himlayang Caviteño after the 2:30 p.m. Mass at St. Peter's Church, P. Justo Street, Cavite City.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord."
Matthew 10:39

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.
Matthew 10:39

"I am the resurrection and life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me will never die." John 11:25-26

Forester DOMINADOR M. FAUSTINO, JR.

Peacefully joined his Creator on March 12, 2004 at the age of 69.

His bereaved wife **Rosa Castillo-Faustino**; children **Bong & Frances, Bing & Romarie, Bang & Osmond, Dowie & Ernie, Dengdeng & Bjorn, Junjun & Marie, Bonbon & Rizza, Suerte & Tricia**; grandchildren, great-grandson, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the St. Therese Chapel, UP Los Baños, Laguna.

Cremation will be today, March 16, 2004 after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

Ex-Mayor JULIAN GUETA GINETE

Peacefully joined his Creator on March 6, 2004 at the age of 86.

His children **Ben, Dan, Leo, Dendit, Daday**, and **Patching**; brother and sister **Engr. Jose G. Ginete** and **Felicidad G. Lopez**; relatives and friends request the readers to pray for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His remains lie in state at his residence in Bulan, Sorsogon.

Interment will be on March 19, 2004 at the Roman Catholic Cemetery.

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April 2, 2004 (Friday)		April 3, 2004 (Saturday)	
11:00 to 11:45 AM	HOW CALL CENTERS HIRE PEOPLE Ms. Gula Bengzon, Operations Director, Call Center Academy	11:00 to 11:45 AM	ENGLISH AND CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING Ms. Gula Bengzon, Operations Director, Call Center Academy
2:00 to 2:45 PM	IMAGE ENHANCEMENT Ms. Aida Yalles, President, ATY Speakers Network	2:00 to 2:45 PM	DO WHAT YOU LOVE TO DO AND GET PAID FOR IT Ms. Jean Lim, President, Powervision
4:00 to 4:45 PM	TIPS AND TECHNIQUES IN PASSING JOB INTERVIEWS Dr. Jose Mardeno, President, Speechpower	4:00 to 4:45 PM	ACQUIRING AMERICAN ACCENT Dr. Jose Mardeno, President, Speechpower

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BAYANTEL AND RED RIBBON TIE-UP

In photo shows, representatives of BayanTel with the subscribers during their visit at Red Ribbon branch. From left Ian Abella (BayanTel — Research), Aurea Ho (BayanTel subscriber), Ey Ey Tolentino (Red Ribbon - Local Store Marketing), Evangeline and Jonina Villacorta (BayanTel subscriber), Cindy Nahil (BayanTel - Marketing) and Ramie dela Fuente (Red Ribbon - Branch Manager).

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- PCP Diplomate
  - Deadline for submission of applications is on March 22, 2004
  - Academic Year 2004 starts on April 1, 2004

II. Fellowship in Pulmonary Medicine
- PCP Diplomate
  - Deadline for submission of application is on May 24, 2004
  - Academic Year 2004 starts on July 1, 2004

III. Fellowship in Anesthesiology
- 3 years Residency in General Anesthesia accredited by PBA (Board eligible)

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5. Four (4) pcs. 2" x 2" picture colored
6. Certificate of Residency in required specialty
7. Specialty Board Certificate in required specialty

Please address your communications to:
JOSE A. YULDE, M.D.
Assistant Director
Office of Education and Research
Philippine Heart Center
East Avenue, Quezon City

For further inquiries, please contact Ms. Carmela M. Ocasion (cp# 09192885303) or Ms. Cleopatra O. Palencia (cp# 09163021735) with Tel. Nos. 925-2401 locals 3234, 3235, 3236 & 3237 and Telefax 926-9622, or you can email to oer@phc.gov.ph

People, Events & Products

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Editor Aries Espinosa

Citystate Savings Bank's NPL ratio drops to 4.1%

PUBLICLY listed Citystate Bank's yearend non-performing loan (NPL) ratio slipped further by 7.66 percent to 4.10 percent in 2003 compared to 4.44 percent in 2002, one of the lowest in the thrift bank industry with latest industry ratio of 12.9 percent. Total deposits soared by 12.11 percent to P801M from P715M of the previous year.

The bank's average Return on Equity (ROE) ratio of 4.76 percent remains to be one of the highest in the thrift bank industry as against latest industry ratio of (0.1 percent). It's Return on Assets stood at 1.90 percent. The total assets rose by 8.1 percent to P1.34B in 2003 from 1.24B in 2002.

The bank's profitability was primarily due to strong trading gains and increased fee based revenues with prudent management on operating expenses and disposal of foreclosed properties.

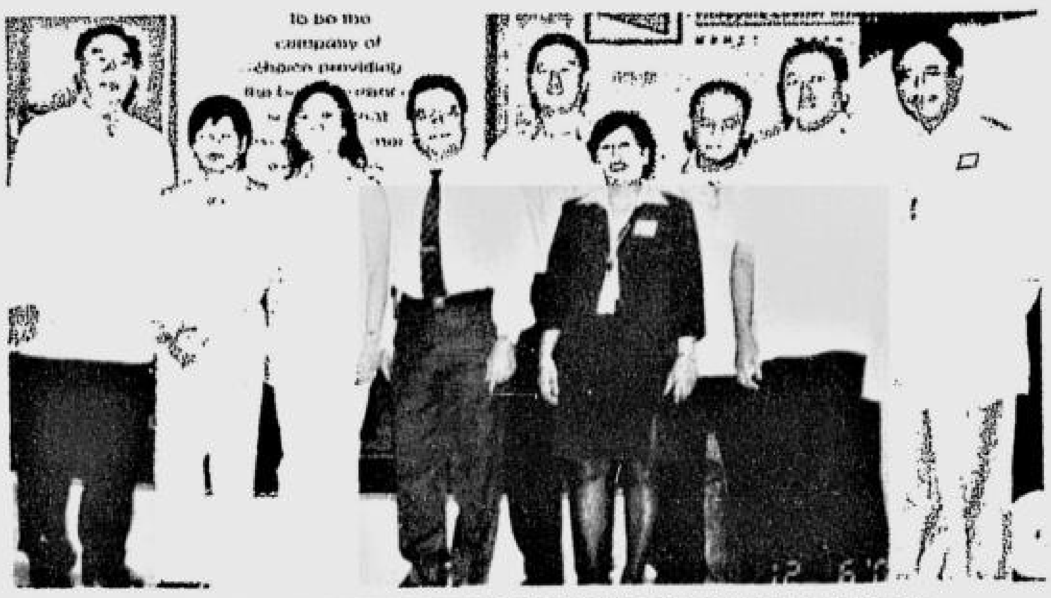
Rey D. Delfin, executive vice president of Citysate said that "The improved performance of the bank was a result of successful implementation of marketing strategies focused on consumer business supported by aggressive selling of deposit products."

Last year, CSBI intensified its marketing efforts and successfully launched the CityMAX, a 3-in-1 account with a minimum deposit of P1,500 which provides a savings passbook for monitoring of account balance with an automatic transfer account from savings to current account; an interest checking account to issue checks to pay for bills; and a CityCash ATM card used for cashless shopping or payment of various utilities, credit card balance and telephone bills.

The jewelry loan product which posted hefty gains last year increased its loan portfolio by 35 percent to P74M in 2003 compared to the same period of the previous year largely attributed to further reduction of the monthly interest rate to as low as 1 percent. Other than that, the bank has embarked on improved loan products to cater to various needs of their clients such as the salary loans and auto loans.

The bank expects a growth rate of at least 10 percent to be driven largely of plans to pursue other deposit campaign programs to expand deposit portfolio and at the same time embark in consumer lending activities by developing new loan products.

Citystate Savings Bank is a Filipino-Singaporean owned company, operated by a consortium which includes the Fortune Insurance Group, and the Citystate Management Group Holdings Pte Ltd of Singapore, a subsidiary of Liberty Mutual Insurance, one of the top 5 biggest and oldest insurance companies in the United States.



PHILCHARTER HONORS FIRST MILLIONAIRE'S CLUB MEMBERS

Philippine Charter Insurance Corp, the non-life insurance company of the Metrobank Group, recently feted the first members of its Millionaire's Club. Launched only this year, the Millionaire's Club is a program that aims to inspire agents to exceed their targets with perks and privileges designed especially for the club members. In photo are the newest members of the club. From left are Francisco Co president of Gainsworth, Cristy Lacap of the Associated Sugar, Maribeth Sy underwriter for Vincent Insurance, Virgilio Tiangco of VAT Insurance agency, Joseph Whang Jr. of PhilCharter Binondo, PhilCharter's SAVP Gina Purungganan, AVP Rudy Samonte, Vencent Ong, and FVP Victoriano Omamalin Jr.

COLLABORATION AGREEMENT
SIGNING

PLDT - CEBU CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company (PLDT) and the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) recently signed a historic collaboration agreement to boost PLDT's and Cebu's Business Sector's goal in helping build an ICT-enabled Cebu. The partnership aims to make Cebu's business sector get bigger, better and more competitive. Photo shows PLDT and CCCI officers during the signing rites, front row from left: Nerisse S. Ramos, PLDT corporate business solutions head; Renato L. Castaneda, PLDT Center Head of Corporate Regional Business; Butch G. Jimenez, PLDT corporate communications & public affairs head; Jovy Hernandez, PLDT corporate business head - Visayas; Chonita Sejas, CCCI assistant board secretary; Teodoro Locson, CCCI. Second row, same order: Ariel Roda, PLDT business development head; Taketo Suzuki, NTT chief operating adviser; Ernesto R. Alberto, PLDT corporate business group head; Manuel V. Pangilinan, PLDT president and CEO; Carlos G. Co, CCCI president; Clarito Fruelda, CCCI business bevelopment and management VP; Consul Samuel Chioson, CCCI membership development VP and Robert Go, CCCI external affairs VP.

Globe Asiatique offers high-end lifestyle at affordable rates

VALENZUELA City, a fast-growing and soon to be a prime location for residential properties, is the site of Globe Asiatique Realty Holdings Inc newest project -Chateau Valenzuela. The condo-ville project is located at P. Gregorio St., Brgy. Linguanan, Valenzuela City and features the luxury and full amenities of condominium living at the most affordable prices.

Delfin Lee, president of Globe Asiatique, assures Chateau's future residents the best in urban living. "One feature that sets Chateau Valenzuela apart from the other housing projects in the area is the site development and the mood and ambience that the project exudes. The perception of people towards Valenzuela will never be the same after the Chateau has been completed. But more than that, our buyers will surely marvel at the first-class amenities and facilities we have provided for such a low price," Lee confides.

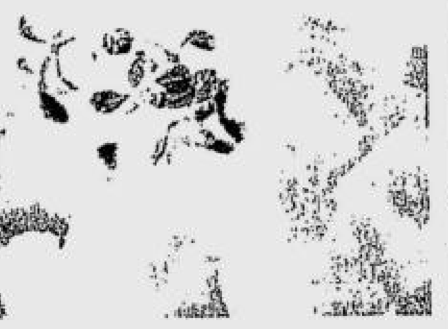
Globe Asiatique is offering a unique financing scheme starting with a "no down payment equity". Qualified Pag-Ibig members may borrow up to P500,000 of which the difference from the actual selling price shall be paid to Globe Asiatique over a maximum period of 18 months, depending on the buyer or on the construction of the units.

To illustrate, Lee explains, "For a P650,000 unit, P500,000 shall be covered by your loan with Pag-Ibig with a term of 25 years at 10 percent interest. The remaining P150,000 equity shall be paid by the buyer at no interest to Globe Asiatique. Even then, we cut the amount of equity to be paid to 50 percent, in effect making the buyer pay initially only P75,000 over a maximum period of 18 months or as soon as the units have been delivered to them. The remaining P75,000 of the equity shall be paid for the next two years, simultaneously with their 25-year term loan with Pag-Ibig. There is no lump sum payment."

The Mediterranean-inspired project consists of 18 six-storey buildings, with 84 units per building. All the units shall be delivered to the buyers fully finished and completely ready for occupancy. Starting from its imposing gate, Chateau Valenzuela boasts of wide landscape avenues, a clubhouse, basketball court, mini playground, a swimming pool with cabana type gazebos, and function rooms for your special gathering. Each building will also have its own perfectly landscape areas, completing the tranquil and relaxing character of the village.

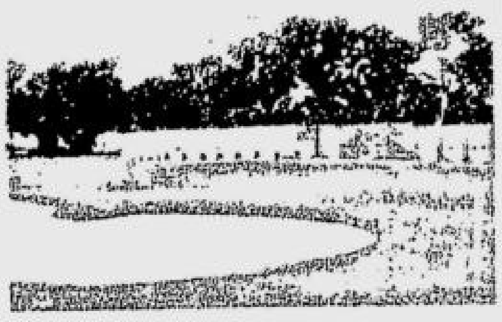
ProductFILES

Iced desserts



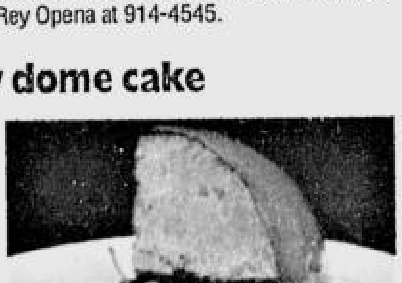
FORGET what you know about iced desserts. Forget the not-so-crushed "crushed" ice and the preservatives. Forget, too, the needless mixing and the overly stuffed feeling you get after eating. At Ice Monster you get non of that. What you get are cool concoctions with finely crushed ice topped with fresh, all natural, healthy ingredients. Scooping is the only stroke you need to know. And after you've savored your last scoop, you feel full but light; you aren't likely to remember how monstrous a serving you've just had. Now, remember this: it's only at Ice Monster where you can experience this cool new way of eating ice. Ice Monster has branches in Food Choices-Greenbelt 3, Glorietta 4, Alabang Town Center, Robinsons Galleria, and J. Abad Santos near Wilson in Greenhills.

Manila Southwoods prefers Vazcrete



VAZBUILT'S Vazcrete Prefab Fencing division has been tapped by Manila Southwoods Golf & Country Club in Carmona, Cavite. Vazcrete is a modular fence system using interlocking prefabricated concrete panels, columns and tie beams that are assembled on site. It is produced from patented technology and is the preferred choice of owners. architects, engineers, builders, developers and landscape artists because it is easy to install, very flexible, practical and cost efficient and does not require high investments on both equipment and manpower. Vazcrete provides seamless beauty and durability to withstand wind, erosion, fire and other environmental factors. It is pre-engineered to create a balance of strength, beauty and durability. Vazcrete is another quality product of Vazquez Building Systems (Vazbuilt). For details, call Rey Opena at 914-4545.

Don Henrico's new dome cake



DON HENRICO'S presents a velvety smooth dome of chocolate mousse dotted with chewy cherry bits atop a moist chocolate cake base. This scrumptious dome is coated in rich chocolate ganache-the perfect way to end a great Don Henrico's meal. Enjoy the Choco Mousse Dome Cake at any of Don Henrico's restaurants. In Metro Manila: Pedro Gil corner A. Mabini; Festival Supermall, Alabang; Jupiter Place or Glorietta 4 in Makati; Brick Road at the Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall; Tomas Morato or Banawe Street or West Avenue in Quezon City. In Cebu, Don Henrico's is at the Entertainment Center of Ayala Center Cebu. In Baguio, visit Don Henrico's along Session Road and at the lower ground floor of SM City Baguio.

ASSUMPTION STUDENTS VISIT THE INQUIRER

Recently visiting the Inquirer for an educational tour are these students of the Assumption College (in photo), who are heartily welcomed by alumna and Inquirer president Sandy Romualdez (not in photo). For inquiries on booking tours, contact 897-8808 local 260 or 209.

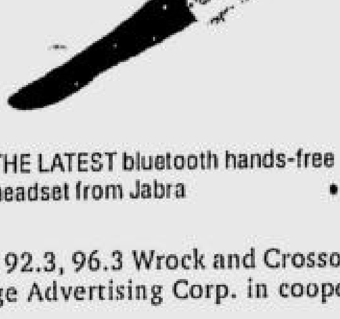
Latest tech products from Nextech 2004

THE LATEST bluetooth hands-free headset from Jabra, GEO G1 262,000 color mobile phone, Laptops with Wi-FI technology and integrated digital cameras from Xitrix, a DVD recorder that can record your favorite TV shows, and the latest LCD TV technology from Sharp electronics.

These are some of the tech products you will see at Nextech 2004. Check out the latest in tech in laptop computers, cellphones, mobile devices, audio & video electronics, digital cameras, security devices and more at Nextech 2004.

The event is made possible by: The Philippine Star, Gadgets Magazine, Jam 88.3, Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9, Rhythms 92.3, 96.3 Wrock and Crossover 105.1 and organized by: Montage Advertising Corp. in cooperation with Exhibits in Action Corp.

For inquiries and other info call 900-3485 to 88.



THE LATEST bluetooth hands-free headset from Jabra

GTBC OPENS IN EASTWOOD

The newly opened Globe Telecom Business Center (GTBC) in Eastwood City, Libis, adds another important contact point for Globe Telecom's growing subscriber base. Customers can view the latest phone models laid out on handset displays, highlighting key features and best value deals. Located at the ground floor of the Cyber1 Mall Mega World Building, GTBC-Eastwood provides a convenient venue to purchase phone kits, SIM packs, call cards, handset accessories and to avail of a Globe Handyphone plan. Shown is Globe Telecom's wireless business group head of sales and distribution Lizanne Uychangco (2nd from left) leading the GTBC-Eastwood opening ceremony.

Wyeth Bonaline supports DOH campaign

WYETH Bonaline supports the Department of Health's 'Ligtas Tigdas' campaign, which aims to eliminate measles by 2008. Last February, there was a massive and intensive immunization of children born from February 1, 1996 to May 1, 2003 regardless of previous immunization of status or infection.

Mapua opens nursing school

IN LINE with Mapua's medium-term plan of becoming one of the Asia's center of academic excellence, the country's premier engineering college will open its School of Health Sciences this coming school year, initially offering the Bachelor of Science in Nursing course (BSN).

This was reported by Mapua president Dr. Rey B. Vea, who disclosed that Mapua has recently been accorded the coveted "Full Autonomous" status by the Commission on Higher Education (Ched).

"This recognition by Ched of Mapua's standards entitles the MIT to start offering new, additional course/programs, and open branches anywhere in the country without Ched's prior approval. This academic freedom spurs our moves into course diversity, and eventually become a University," Dr. Vea said.

Why nursing or health science courses? Dr. Vea explained that it is widely known that the pressing global need for better trained health care professionals like nurses, doctors, will be there for the next decade and beyond. This is so because of the aging population particularly in developed societies, such the United States of America, European nations, even Japan and some Asian countries like Korea and Taiwan.

"Also, one reason why the Yuchengco Group of Companies (YGC) headed by Ambassador Alfonso Yuchengco acquired majority ownership of Mapua has been to realize its corporate social responsibility of developing the Philippine human resources, and to generate sustainable/continuous employment opportunities for the Filipinos."

"While Mapua has been equated with excellence in engineering education, this diversification into health sciences and commitment to Mapua's tradition of excellence is admittedly getting out of our "comfort zones," Dr. Vea added.

He stressed, however, that as Mapua has launched non-engineering course primarily Biotechnology last year, the Nursing Program and the health science programs will be given the same sharp focus in terms of rigid, globally-oriented, high-tech based curriculum and extensive medical/hospital training.

"As proof of Mapua's resolve to equally excel in producing better nursing and health professionals, the appointed Dean of the School of Health Sciences is the multi-awarded Deogracia Valderrama, BSN, MHA, MAN, the immediate former Director for Nursing in the University of the Philippines (UP-PGH). A longtime faculty of the UP College of Nursing, the Unites States and United Nation's World Health Organization (UN-WHO) trained Valderrama is well respected in academic and health care circles locally and internationally, having had over 40 years sterling track record as faculty, author, nursing administrator and consultant both in the Philippines and in other countries," Dr. Vea said.

DEPED PROGRAM TO EXPAND ICT EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Education Secretary Edilberto de Jesus (second from left), together with the Coca-Cola Company Philippines division president Alex von Behr, senior presidential adviser on international competiveness Roberto Romulo and Mirant Philippines Foundation executive director Roberto Calingo, sign the memorandum of agreement launching the Department of Education's new program to expand Information and Communications Technology (ICT) education in the country's public high schools.

Honda Phils Inc holds its 2004 Dealers' Convention

HONDA Philippines, Inc (HPI) held its 2004 Dealers' Convention last Feb 10 at the PICC Forum 1.

HPI plans to sell 250,000 units of motorcycles in 2004, or half the total industry projection for the year of 500,000 units. A new sales policy for dealers designed for fair competition, maximization of retail activities, the giving of incentive rewards for attainment and the recognition of 3S commitment to expansion was put on the floor.

HPI plans to focus on customer satisfaction in 2004. The company also sees the key to attaining its sales goal lying in the solo category, with the business category projected to be maintained. The company's operations will be strengthened, and strategic models suited to Philippine taste will be launched. HPI has also taken the lead in developing a Philippine motorcycle culture.

Sales strategies were discussed during the convention.

At the Awards Night for dealers held after the business meeting, Honda leaders delivered speeches about their hopes and plans for the company. Noel Cereno, HPI national sales manager, spoke of the company's new sales policy, its thrust toward customer satisfaction and its projected sales goals for the year, along with other matters in support of their goals.

Satoshi Toshida, managing director of Honda Motor Co Ltd and president and CEO of Asian Honda Motor Co Ltd said that great potential for growth lay in the Philippine motorcycle market.

Yasuhiro Oyama, HPI president and general manager said that Honda must focus on its overall operation and on its corporate philosophy of the 'Joy of Buying."

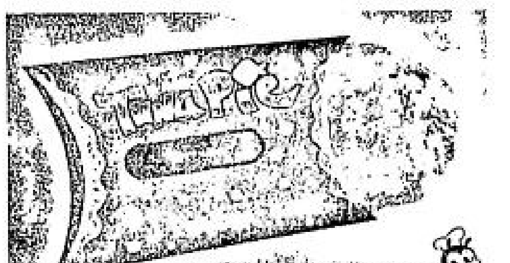
Ambassador Benjamin Sanvictores, Philippine envoy to Japan and HPI chair of the board of directors said that he was impressed by Honda's taking the lead in creating a Philippine motorcycle culture.

HPI launched its bid to take the lead in creating a Philippine motorcycle culture through a colorful musical and dance presentation. Awards were given to the top dealers with the top awardee delivering a message. A ceremonial toast by Amb. Sanvictores concluded the awarding rites.

Honda Philippines, Inc. is the leader in the Philippine motorcycle industry. It is the pioneer in 4-stroke motorcycles in the country.

Product FILES

Try the new tuna pie at Jollibee



NOW, teens and adults have something new to look forward to this Lenten season. No need to worry about meat because there is a delectable offer that they will surely find irresistible. Everyone can enjoy the new Tuna Pie from Jollibee.
This crunchy pie is baked to golden brown goodness, filled with chunky tuna meat, carrots, mashed potato and cheese, cooked in a special creamy sauce. It's affordable at only P16. You can also bring home this wonderful treat in packs of 3's at only P46 or 6's at only P92. On regular days, it also makes a great combination with your other Jollibee favorites such as the yummy Jolly Spaghetti, the flavorful Palabok Fiesta, and the crispy French Fries Try the new Tuna Pie from Jollibee today. It's so good, you'll keep fishing for more.

New Carefree Limited Edition Prints

THESE oh-so-cute mini boxes simply can't escape your eye. For a girl who just loves getting her hands into things that are new, fresh, fun and exciting, you'll definitely fall in love with the New Carefree Limited Edition Prints. A definite must-have in your kikay kit, this liner comes in four cute and hip packaging designs, fitting your every mood, definitely blending with your other colorful and trendy kikay stuff, and even matching your favorite top, bag or fashion accessory. To top it off, this ever-reliable liner gives you the best coverage in an ultrathin form keeping you feeling fresh, confident and simply carefree all day, everyday in school, in the mall, at a party, and everywhere else. New Carefree Limited Edition Prints are now available at only P17.50 each in your nearby supermarkets, department stores, and your favorite health and beauty shops nationwide.

Memo 2004

SINCE last year, Memo has worked with top international model Nick Leary. He is the brand's image model and is highly identified with Memo. For the new 2004 campaign, Memo features Nick Leary to create some of the most 'Memo'rable Memo images and reflect the dynamic spirit of Memo to perfection. Memo is a new work lifestyle brand designed for the upwardly mobile men and women. These accomplished individuals are the type who can afford to "dress down" at work yet exude power and confidence.
Memo carries a wide collection of clothing and accessories designed to be worn from work to weekend. Memo fits the urban lifestyle and provides endless options and confident city living. It offers versatile pieces and refined separates that reflect the smart casual looks for everyday elegance in the office or in the go. Nick Leary is the perfect choice as he is, without a doubt, one of the most sought models of the world. Memo Signature, Updates and Essentials, all the trends in the Memo collection look spectacular on Nick.

BITS Clips

Real estate seminar

THE REAL Estate education center will conduct a comprehensive real estate and review for seven Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 12 noon, which started last March 14 at Jonis Penthouse, Pasay Road, Makati. The course will prepare applicants for the real estate brokers licensure examination scheduled by the BTRCP on May 30. Seminar participants can avail of free consultation on their real estate problems. Lecture reviewer is lawyer Ruben Palacio Jr, reputed dean of professional real estate educators.

Seminar on tax updates

THE PHILIPPINE Institute of Certified Public Accountants (Picpa) invites you to attend a seminar on tax updates to be held on March 19, 1 to 5 p.m. at the Skytop, Hotel Intercontinental Manila, Ayala Avenue, Makati City. Various resource speakers during the seminar are Rhoda Incaranom and Armi Linsagan. For more information and reservation, call Beth Paguio or Nancy Capangpangan at the National Secretariat at 723-5467 or 723-0691 to 95.

Voice clinic slated

THE JOSCEPHINE Gomez Clinic for Voice Therapy and Rehabilitation will hold an optimum pitch level (OPL - the level at which voice sounds best and most at ease) testing, tone focusing and evaluation of both the singing and/or speaking voice on March 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 21 from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. at its main clinic in Ortigas. For details, call 687-7898.

HRCI training programs '04

HUMAN Resource Consultants Inc (HRCI) will be conducting a series of workshops. This programs include: Basic Course on Writing Psychological Reports on March 15 and 16; Workshop on IQ and Aptitude Testing on April 27 and 28; and Personality Testing Workshop on May 25 and 26. The programs will be held at the HRCI conference room at room 905, Hanston Bldg., Emerald Ave., Ortigas Center. For details and inquiries, contact Myra or Minnie at 633-7078 to 79.

3 management seminars set

CORPORATE Achievers Institute (Coach) will be holding this March three management seminars focusing on leadership, marketing and organizational skills - "Creating High Performance Teams" on March 9 to 10, which was held at the Oakwood Premier, Ayala Center; "Executive Marketing Program" on March 16, to be held at the Summit Lounge of Holiday Inn Galleria Manila, Ortigas Center; and "Executive Organization Capability Program" on March 30, to be held also at the Oakwood Premier. For inquiries call 722-2318 or 727-7142.

Partnership of Titans

MONTBLANC, recently tied up with Century Park Hotel, to provide additional benefit to the guests of the hotel. Guests of Century Park Hotel would be receiving a special postcard that would entitle them to a special 10 percent reduction on any of Montblanc's merchandise on display at its newest store on the 2nd level, Padre Faura Wing, Robinsons Place Manila. Montblanc is exclusively distributed in the Philippines by Rustan's Commercial Corp. The partnership will run until March 31.

MAMA SITA'S SUPPORTS CANCER SURVIVOR

In 2002, a student of the University of Santo Tomas named Ernesto 'Ting' Medrano III grew a lump on his wrist and was diagnosed as having osteosarcoma. After undergoing a series of cobalt treatments, he went on remission the same year. As form of thanksgiving, he organized a Christmas party for other cancer patients with the help of his parents and close friends. Together with an organization of parents from the La Salle Zobel High School Medrano led his group in cheering up some 150 pediatric and cancer patients at the Philippine General Orthopedic Hospital last December, treating them to lunch, games, Christmas carols and gift packs from Mama Sita's mixes and sauces. When asked why he chose Mama Sita's as partner in the project, Medrano said that being Filipino owned, Mama Sita's is in a better position to help fellow Filipinos.

CHERRY COKE LAUNCHED

Shoppers at Robinsons Ermita, Galleria and the newly opened Metro East got an unexpected surprise as Coca-Cola Bottlers Phils Inc (CCBPI) account executive Noel Nepomuceno and his team gave out free samples of Coca-Cola's latest product to hit the Philippine market - Cherry Coke. Photo shows a throng of curious shoppers lining up to get a free taste.

SCA acquires baby and incontinence diaper company in Asia

SCA, the leading hygiene products company in Europe has acquired all shares of Drypers Malaysia. Drypers is a profitable, fast growing baby diaper and adult diaper company with a projected 2004 annual turnover in excess of 90m USD and operations in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines. Drypers, now part of SCA Hygiene Products Malaysia, has approximately 580 employees and capacity of circa 800m diapers pieces per year from their production facility in Kuala Lumpur. Their baby diaper brand Drypers is currently number 1 in Malaysia and Singapore, number 2 in Thailand and was successfully launched in the Philippines in 2002. Additionally, Control Plus, the adult diaper brand, is market leader in Malaysia and Singapore.

In the Philippines, the SCA Hygiene product offering will be enhanced by the addition of Drypers Baby Diaper. This will complement existing consumer brands including: Softee Toilet Paper, Softee Facial Tissues, Softee Royale Kitchen Towels, Softee Gem Table Napkins, Tena Incontinence products, Libresse Feminine Protection and Tork products in the away-from-home market. SCA Hygiene Products Philippines will now employ over 340 people within its two manufacturing sites in Cavite and their headquarters in Alabang.

The former Drypers Company was established in 2001 via a management buy-out after the former US based Drypers Company filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. Since then, the management by Peter Smerling, has turned the company around and brought it to profitable growth. Drypers, now the new SCA Hygiene Products Malaysia, will be run as an independent unit reporting to the SCA Area Headquarters in Shanghai.

The acquisition will increase SCA Hygiene Products turnover in Asia to more than 150m USD in 2004. Drypers complements SCA's existing hygiene business in the Philippines as well as Tena Incontinence care products in most other Asian markets. SCA Hygiene products will now have local organizations and substantial business in six important markets, Japan, Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. SCA will be one of the leading baby and incontinence product suppliers in the region and this acquisition strongly supports SCA's target of building a substantial position in the hygiene business in Asia.

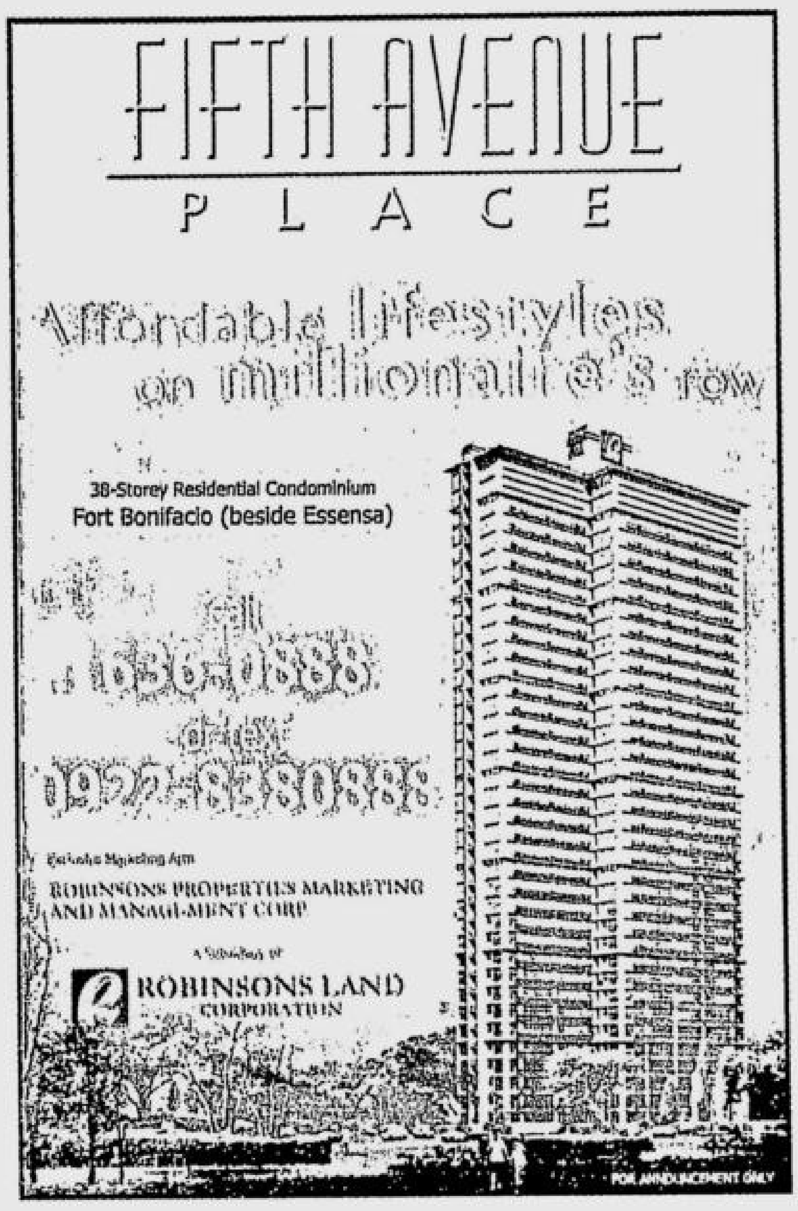
ISLANDS SOUVENIR OPENS FRANCHISE IN CAPIZ

Islands Souvenirs recently opened its franchise at the ground floor of Central Plaza Inn, corner Lopez Jaena and Rizal Avanue, Roxas City, Capiz. The store, owned by Nick and Dorothy Villaruz, is the latest franchise in Visayas. Present during the opening are: (from left) Nick Villaruz; Judy Roxas, chair, Gerry Foundation; (from right) Jay Aldeguer, president/founder, Islands Souvenir; Roxas City Mayor Tony del Rosario; Dorothy Villaruz; Suzette del Rosario, wife of Mayor del Rosario, and friends.

BUSINESS

LARGE CORPORATIONS

Non-remittance of withheld taxes probed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By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue said it was considering filing estafa charges against certain large companies belonging to the Top 10,000 corporations that failed to remit the taxes they withheld from suppliers of goods and services.

According to Revenue Deputy Commissioner Kim Henares, the revenue agency is conducting an investigation of the extent of liabilities of these companies, which were suspected of using the withheld taxes, for possible prosecution.

Henares, however, declined to name the erring companies prior to the completion of the investigation.

"Non-remittance of withheld taxes is estafa because those taxes belong to the government," Henares told reporters.

The BIR official made the statement in view of the failure of some large companies to remit to the BIR the taxes they withheld. The BIR finds out about the non-remittance of withheld taxes when the suppliers' creditable tax claims do not match the actual remittance made by their clients.

Supplier-companies report to the BIR the amount of taxes withheld from them so that the amount would be deducted from their total tax obligations.

The country's Top 10,000 corporations are mandated by law to withhold one percent of income tax on goods, and 2 percent of income tax on the services they are availing themselves of from suppliers. They are obliged to remit the withheld taxes every month.

To monitor the accuracy of the remittance made by large companies, they are required to submit an "alpha list" once a year. The list contains the names of their large suppliers and the amount of taxes withheld from them.

Henares said the compliance rate among large companies was very low. She said only 30 percent of the companies required to submit their alpha list last year had actually complied with the requirement. She said the BIR was looking at increasing the penalty for late and non-submission of the alpha list to ensure compliance with this rule.

"A lot of companies do not comply with the reportorial requirement maybe because the penalty is small. That is why we have to increase the penalty to force them to comply," said Henares.

The current penalty for failure to submit an alpha list is only P1,000, said Henares.

Henares said the BIR was also set to call the attention of government agencies that likewise failed to remit withheld taxes on time.

The move to tighten the collection of withheld taxes is part of the BIR's effort to increase tax collection and help reduce the government's huge budget deficit.

The BIR, which contributes about 80 percent of government revenue, is tasked to collect P477 billion this year, or 10.8 percent higher than the P425.3 billion collected in 2003.

RP, India sign cooperation agreement

By Ronnel W. Domingo

TRADE cooperation in information technology, drugs and jewelry were forged between the Philippines and India during the recently concluded 8th Joint Working Group meeting in New Delhi, the Department of Trade and Industry said.

Trade Undersecretary Thomas G. Aquino said the two-day meeting touched on issues "that make up the foundation of our commercial engagement and establish the groundwork for future concerns and actions that relate to our trade relations."

India granted the Philippines' request for assistance in identifying Indian software assessors that could provide professional exposure to local firms that want to be assessors.

"Both (countries) considered taking joint actions with regard to federal and state legislations in the United States that seek to restrict overseas call centers by preventing US companies to work in any overseas contracts," Aquino added.

India and the Philippines are major destinations of outsourced call centers from major companies in North America and Europe.

He said that in the field of medicine manufacturing, India also agreed to: share agricultural techniques for medicinal plants; work with the Philippines on standards for herbal drugs that had been developed in India on a case-to-case basis; talk on a possible joint venture for the manufacture and marketing in the Philippines of medicinal plants through the Indian Ayurvedic industry.

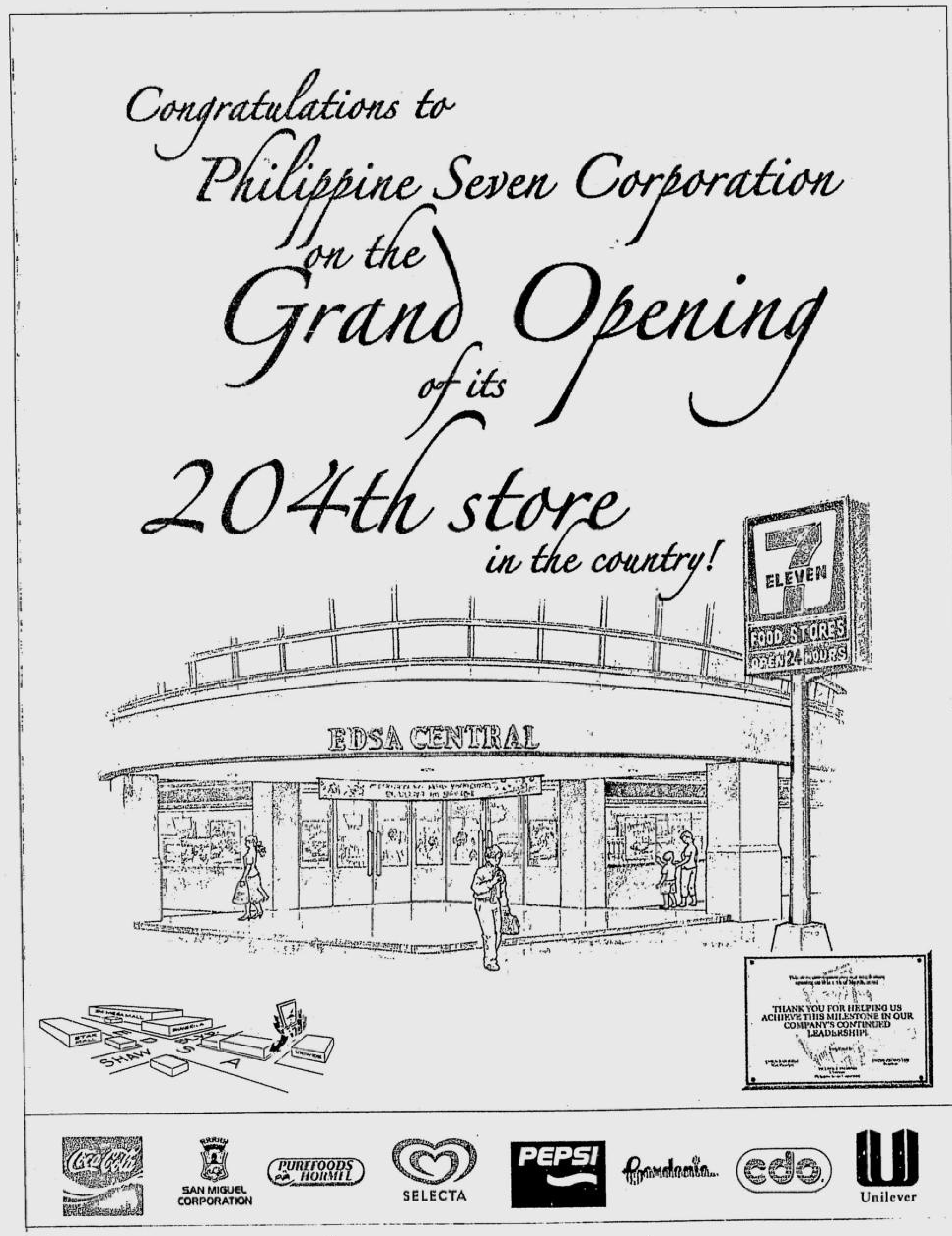
Also, the local seaweed industry expressed interest to share the use of carrageenan-based capsule with Indian pharmaceutical companies.

Other possible cooperation raised include: technical assistance from India for training and supply of equipment on gemstone cutting; working out a memorandum of agreement on coconut coir processing; resuming implementation of an MOU on the development of energy-related projects including wind and solar power and compressed natural gas for transportation; help in dairy industry development, including the marketing of Indian milk in the country; and rehabilitation of the railway between Calamba in Laguna and Calumpit in Bulacan.

DTI data showed that over the last five years, the Philippines incurred trade deficits with India ranging from $94 million in 1999 to $326 million in 2002. Bilateral trade grew 31.5 percent in the same period.

Major exports to India consisted of electric integrated circuits, newsprint, phosphoric acid, machine parts and accessories, fiberglass, and semi-conductor devices.

Imports from India include rice, wheat as animal feed, frozen meat of cattle and soybean oil cake.


Congratulations to Philippine Seven Corporation on the Grand Opening of its 204th store in the country!

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US ACHIEVE THIS MILESTONE IN OUR COMPANY'S CONTINUED LEADERSHIP.
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$60-M World Bank loan eyed for agri marketing

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE DEPARTMENT of Agriculture is negotiating a $60-million loan from the World Bank to finance a diversified marketing program for Philippine agriculture, livestock and fishery products here and abroad.

"It is primarily focused on improving the marketability of farm and fishery products and in increasing and diversifying farmers' income," said Agriculture Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo Jr. in a letter to the World Bank.

Lorenzo noted that the improvement in production would not translate to profitability unless the farmers got fair prices and returns for their efforts.

Of the proposed $60-million loan, $15 million is to be earmarked for for marketing development services.

Among the DA agencies that would benefit from the project are the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service, Bureau of Agricultural Statistics, Information and Technology Center for Agriculture and Fisheries, Agriculture and Fisheries Information Service, and National Agricultural and Fishery Council.

The proposed project will allocate $18 million for market development investments, including infrastructure investments, training and workshops, and operating costs.

Some $15 million is to be programmed for the strengthening of quality assurance systems for market development. The agencies that would receive the funds are the Bureau of Agriculture and Fishery Product Standards, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Bureau of Plant Industry, Bureau of Animal Industry, National Meat Inspection Commission, and Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority.

The Bureau of Agricultural Research, Bureau of Post Harvest Research and Extension and Agricultural Training Institute will receive under the plan a total of $9 million, excluding the counterpart fund, for market-linked technology development and dissemination.

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Yoga and Pilates—a comparison

Part I

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

YOGA and Pilates are the two most popular types of mind-body exercise classes not just in the United States but also here in the Philippines.

People are always asking me which of the two they should take. My standard answer is both. This is easy for me to say because I teach both types and I can conveniently fit both formats into my weekly class schedule. Other people may not be so fortunate because the classes are offered at different times in their fitness centers or only one type is taught there.

So here is a comparison of yoga and Pilates to help you decide which is better for you. For people with little knowledge of either discipline, this will be an introduction of sorts.

Yoga is a 5,000-year-old philosophy encompassing an entire lifestyle including ethical and spiritual values, not just exercise. The poses or *asanas* were originally invented so yoga practitioners could hold their bodies in static positions for long periods while they were meditating.

Pilates exercises were invented by German Joseph Pilates to strengthen his

YOGA/C3

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Clarity
John Mayer
Heavier Things
RINGTONE: N7
POLYTONE: T7
WALLPAPER: FREE***
LYRICS: LY7

One of These Days
Michelle Branch
Hotel Paper
RINGTONE: N8
POLYTONE: T8
WALLPAPER: C8
LYRICS: LY8

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Blink 182
Blink 182
RINGTONE: N9
POLYTONE: T9
WALLPAPER: C9
LYRICS: LY9

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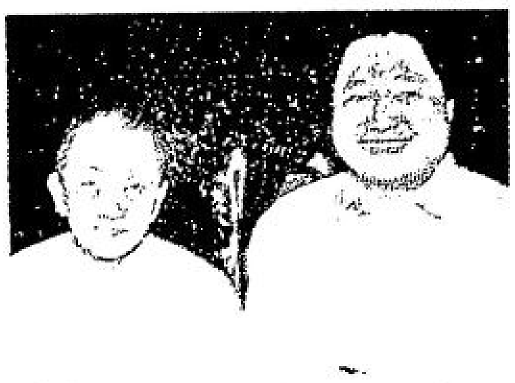
THEY loved NW's latest wow seats! Sally Marshall, Rod Ridgeway with wife Lisa, Interpacific Transit Inc.'s top man Don Marshall, INQUIRER's Marixi Prieto and Northwest-ITI GM Gina Campos

Cool drink hosts hot competition

COMPARING AIRLINES. Raytheon Ebasco's Harold McQueen with Joe Webber and Brian Lane of Asian Tigers Lane Moving and Storage



HOTSHOT NW REGULARS. SGV chair Washington SyCip and Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima

YOUNG JETSETTERS. Model and INQUIRER fashion columnist Apples Aberin-Sadhwani and businessman husband Raj

GINA and Raffy Hechanova of Concepcion-Carrier

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen on Kodak Max

NESTEA kicks off the summer season with the Nestea Beach Volley 2004, the most anticipated sports event of the season that promises to be more exciting and exhilarating than ever before, *palanggas*.

"The success of the previous games has prompted us to once again hold this event," said Nestea brand manager **Tina Samaco**, during the press con at the Rockwell Club.

"We're now on our eighth year, and we're sure our audience will be thrilled because the games are bigger and better," she added.

Hey, with over half a million in cash and other prizes at stake, and a more rigorous screening, this competition is sure to be more challenging and exciting. Tour manager **Babes Castillo** explained, "we now use a 'seeding' system based on the results of last year's games. We ranked the teams and invited the top placers, ensuring that the best of the best are competing for the honors and the prizes."

Nicky Limjap of Nestea's marketing and events group added, "Apart from the schools competing, our spectators will see famous personalities in beach volley action in Boracay, where we will be holding a celebrity match."

Gorgeous **Bianca Araneta**, as well as handsome **Hans Montenegro**, who hosted superbly the press launch, dahlings, will be among the hotshots who will be at the Nestea event.

Topping the recent Luzon elimination at Rockwell were the women's teams of Colegio de San Juan de Letran, University of Baguio, Adamson University and De la Salle University-College of St. Benilde (DLSU-CLSB). The men's teams were from the University of the Philippines Diliman, DLSU-CSB, Far Eastern University and DLSU.

Elimination for Visayas was held March 12-13, and for Mindanao, March 14, both at the Ayala Center Cebu. Winners of the elimination rounds will fly to breezy Boracay for the semi-finals on April 16 and the championship, natch, on April 17-18.

Champions in both the men's and women's divisions will receive a cool P100,000, while their schools will get P50,000 worth of sports equipment. Second place winners will receive P50,000, while the third placers will get P25,000. All winners will receive trophies, naturellement.

MOVERS and shakers. Coach Babes Castillo of Next; Marie Pascual of Rapp Collins International; Nicky Limjap of Nestea marketing and events group; Tina Samaco, Nestea brand manager; and Johann Tan-Pho, Nestea marketing and events group assistant

LIKE father, like daughter. Mario Sison of HS batch '78 with daughter Bianca after completing the 3-K run

Go to it, people. Who knows, I might just be there cheering for you? Service, play ball!

Co-sponsoring the Nestea Beach Volley 2004 are Speedo, Cebu Pacific, Mikasa, Coppertone, Shakey's, Smart, Power Plant Mall, Ayala Center Cebu, Le Soleil de Boracay and TGI Friday's.

Seat of power

Northwest Airlines unveiled its fab new lie-flat World Business Class seat in a massive derriere-to-derriere fun cocktail party at the Rigodon Ballroom of the Peninsula Manila. Northwest's top jet-setters, hotshot VIP accounts, moneyed WorldPerks Platinum Elite members and well-heeled personalities from the social and business circles attended the smashingly successful seat launch.

An actual seat pod, making its debut in Manille as part of an Asia-Pacific Tour, was actually set up for the invitees to try.

"The new seat is Northwest's latest product investment that allows passengers the ultimate in comfort," said NW's popular heavyweight general manager, always with a friendly smile, **Ray Nishihira**. And, take note, *palanggas*, "Northwest is the only US airline with a lie-flat business class seat serving trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific destinations."

Northwest also has, for its business travelers, state-of-the-art in-flight entertainment system featuring a screen 50 percent larger than on any other American airline. Not bad, huh?

The party's big come-on was a raffle of two World Business Class tickets to the United States. Entertainment was by show-stopping premier violinist **John Lesaca**, backed by the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra. Television personality **Mari Kaimo** was host.

Welcoming Northwest's hot names were Northwest Airlines' vice president international **Fred Deschamps**, GM Ray Nishihira; NW-ITI brilliant GM **Gina Campos** and cyber smart marketing communications manager **Adin Gonzales**, with Interpacific Transit Inc. (ITI) top honchos **Donald Marshall** and **Catalino Bondoc.** Also there was the rah-rah powerhouse super sales and marketing team of Northwest Airlines, natch!

GORGEOUS hosts Hans Montenegro and Bianca Araneta

Ateneo homecoming

The Ateneo Silver Jubilarians Batch '78, headed by Ateneo Alumni Association president **Loy Labayen**, High School '78 Foundation Inc. chair **Tony Veloso,** and president **Jimmy Hofileña**, and Ateneo General Homecoming 2003 chair **Rene Banzon**, hosted the annual Ateneo General Homecoming several full moons ago, *palanggas*.

Unknown to many is that behind this tradition is a super cause-related commitment. As in previous years, Batch '78 organized for a whole year different activities to generate funds to sustain the Ateneo Scholarship Fund, "which provides support, training programs and financial aid to Ateneo teachers, their families, and staff."

This year, 2004, *palanggas*, High School Batch '79 will continue the tradition.

The Atenean's main pursuit in life is to be an advocate of formation values centering on the call for the alumnus to be "a man for others." As a follower of Christ, "the Atenean is expected to devote his life to his fellowmen and, through the promotion of justice, serve the poor and the powerless. It is what we are expected to live and work for," Ateneo's rah-rah homecoming chair, super blue boy Rene Banzon, explained to *moi*.

The get-togethers, *palanggas*, continuously remind the alumni of this task.

I'm a die-hard La Sallite, *palanggas*, but let's give the Blue Eagles the credit due them. "Fly high blue eagle, fly."

"*Lux in Domino*!"

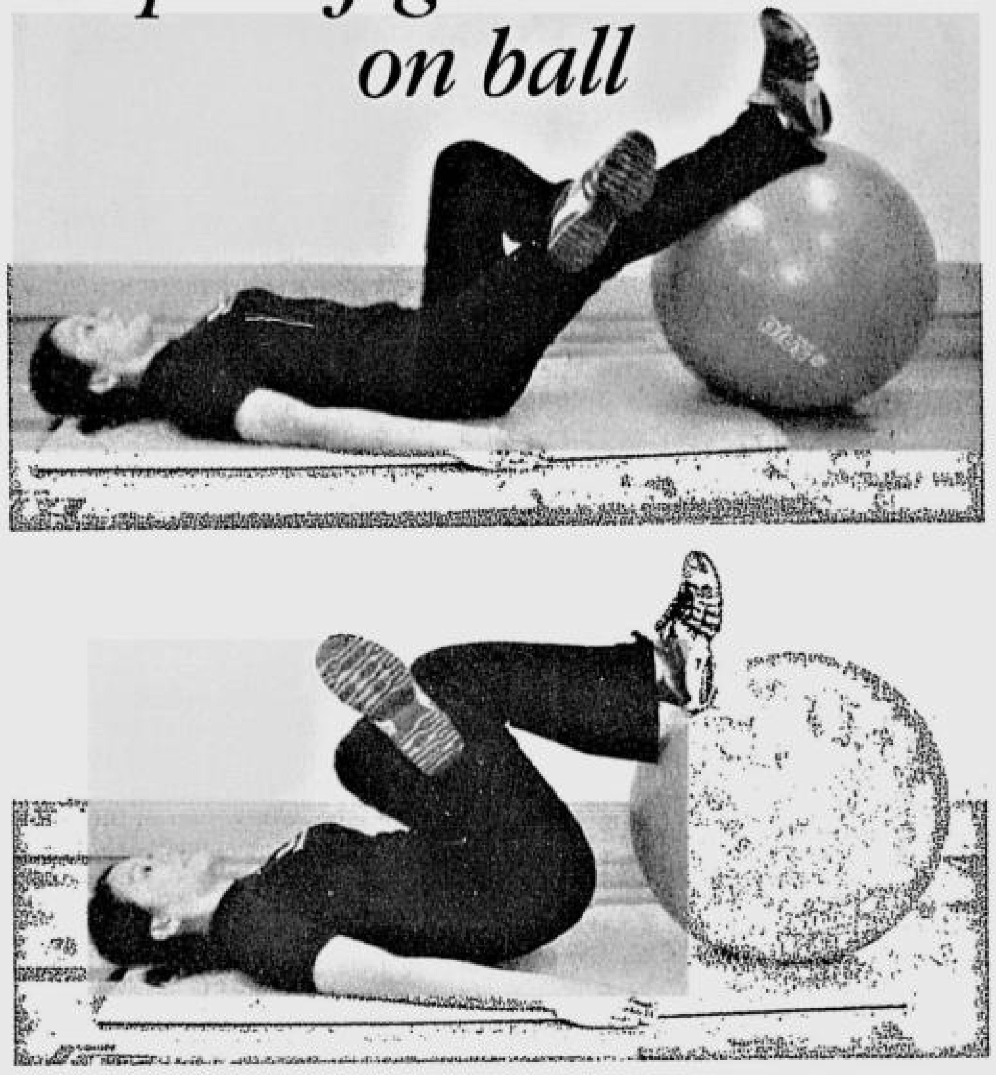
BLUE EAGLE PILLARS. Ateneo Alumni Association president Loy Labayen, Ateneo HS batch '78 foundation chair Tony Veloso, HS batch '78 foundation president Jimmy Hofileña and Ateneo Homecoming chair Rene Banzon

NORTHWEST-ITI GM Gina Campos and marketing communications manager Adin Gonzales (standing) pose with NW VP International Fred Deschamps and NW GM Ray Nishihira who are trying out the actual World Business Class seat pod.

THE POWER GALS. Enjoying great food, endless wine and entertainment are hardcore Northwest supporters—Griffin Sierra's Marilou Ngo, Pan Pacific's Helen Hao and friend, NW-ITI's Elaine Dato, First United's Mayie Justo, Sharp Travel's Lou Banzon, Lucky Travel's Lulu Villanueva and account manager Lulubelle Castañeda.

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Supine figure-4 stretch on ball



THIS exercise stretches the buttocks.

Equipment:

Stability ball and exercise mat. The exercise can also be done without a ball.

Exercise technique:

1. Lie on your back with both legs on the ball.

2. Cross one leg over the other by placing the ankle on top of the thigh.

3. Bend your straight leg and roll the ball toward your hips.

4. Hold the stretch for the desired length of time. Repeat on other leg.

Performance tips:

1. Keep your arms at your sides or bring both hands behind your thigh and pull your legs closer to your chest.

2. If it bothers your knee to do the figure four, avoid this exercise or adjust the position of your leg by not opening up so much from the hip.

Repetitions:

Hold for 10-20 seconds. Do one or two sets.

Yoga and Pilates—a comparison

From page C1

sickly body and, later, to rehabilitate injured soldiers in World War I. Pilates introduced the technique, which he originally called "Contrology," to the dance world when he immigrated to the United States.

Since yoga is a philosophy, there is much more to yoga than just the poses or *asanas*. I will only be citing the similarities and differences between yoga and Pilates exercise classes.

I need to point out that there are many variations of yoga (Iyengar versus Ashtanga, for example) and there are different ways you can do Pilates (mat-based versus machine, as well as exercises with a mini ball, rubber band, foam rollers, etc.). The comparison will be based on the general principles of both formats.

Yoga is considered the "father" of all exercise techniques while *chi kung* (from which *tai chi* is derived) is the "mother." We can definitely call Pilates a child of yoga and *chi kung* because many exercises were obviously borrowed from yoga but have the flowing movement of *chi kung*.

Mind-body-spirit

Yoga and Pilates both encourage "mindful movement." Unlike running or walking, where your movement becomes automatic, you have to keep your mind totally focused on what your body is doing when you practice yoga or Pilates.

Joseph Pilates said, "Contrology develops not only the muscles of the body, suppleness of the limbs, and functioning of the vital organs and endocrine glands, it also clarifies the mind and develops the will." Some of his other favorite sayings were "the mind shapes the body" and "where the mind goes, the body will follow."

Meanwhile, B.K.S. Iyengar said, "*Asanas* have been evolved over the centuries so as to exercise every muscle, nerve and gland in the body. But their real importance lies in the way they train and discipline the mind."

According to Michele Hebert, an international mind-body fitness consultant, most mind-body exercises, including yoga and Pilates, have three similar characteristics to achieve a healthy balance between mind, body and spirit. These are mindfulness, correct physical form and breathing. Hebert says the mind stays focused on the correct movement of the body while the breath is considered the "bridge" that links the mind and body. Slow down your breath and you relax; speed it up and you feel energized.

Mara Carrico, author of Yoga Journal's "Yoga Basics," gives a simple guideline to remember when doing any type of mind-body exercise: focus (for the mind), relax (for the body) and breathe (for the spirit). Mind, body, spirit=focus, relax, breathe.

Static versus dynamic

Yoga exercises are static (Ashtanga is an exception), meaning you get into the pose, you hold it for several breath cycles and then you get out of the pose. Pilates exercises, meanwhile, are constantly moving. You perform five to 10 repetitions of an exercise, and then you move on to the next.

Not only that, Pilates strives to develop a graceful and fluid rhythm as you perform the repetitions and as you move from one exercise to another. It's no wonder that Pilates became a favorite of dancers like Martha Graham and George Balanchine.

Coordinated breathing

Breathing is a big thing with both yoga and Pilates. Both believe in coordinating the breath with the movement. Pilates has one basic style of breathing, which is called "ribcage breathing." The purpose is to stabilize and protect your spine while you are in different positions by holding your abdominal muscles tight but still allowing you to take deep breaths by expanding the ribcage.

Yoga, meanwhile, has many styles of breathing for many different purposes. There is belly breathing to relax you, the "ujjayi breathing" where you make a Darth Vader sort of sound at the back of your throat to help keep your focus during the poses, the "breath of fire" to energize you, and the alternate nostril breathing to calm you down. And there are many other more advanced breathing techniques for deeper meditation.

Another difference between the breathing of yoga and Pilates is that in yoga, you use your nose to inhale and exhale while in Pilates, you inhale through the nose and exhale with the mouth. Yogis believe the mouth is only for eating and talking while Pilates uses forced mouth exhalations to reinforce the tightening effect in the abdominal muscles.

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

'Unknown' is basketball players' choice

From page C4

its basketball products to expand in Southeast Asia under the direction of Relzbach Ventures Inc. It eventually expanded its product line, which now includes a complete range of shoes, shorts, tees, sleeveless tees, sweatshirts, pants, team uniforms, licensed collegiate gear and accessories.

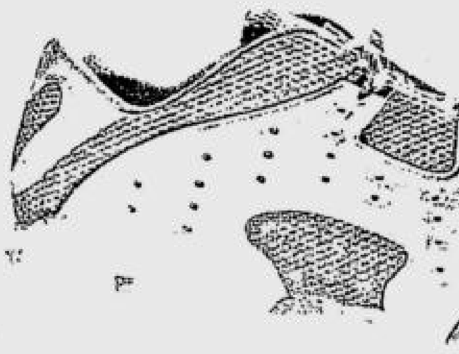
More than 20 percent of the players of the National Basketball Association in the United States, including Ben Wallace of the Detroit Pistons, Vladimir Radmanovic of the Seattle Super Sonics, Jason Williams of the Memphis Grizzlies and Bobby Jackson of the Sacramento Kings now endorse AND 1, Bachmann said.

In the Philippines, Alaska Aces' Mike Cortez and Rob Duat are AND 1's celebrity endorsers. Among the players of the Philippine Basketball Association wearing AND 1 are Jimmy Alapag of Talk 'N Text, Noy Castillo of Purefoods, and the entire Alaska Aces team.

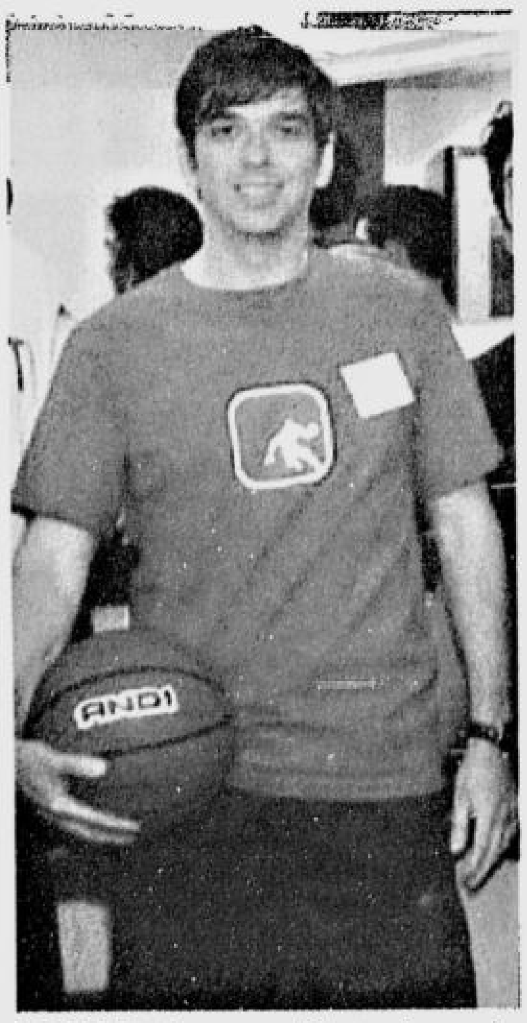
Relzbach Ventures Inc. now has six AND 1 retail stores. Its products are distributed in 160 department, sporting goods and specialty stores across Southeast Asia.

AND 1 is distributed by Relzbach Ventures Inc., with branches at Festival Mall Alabang, Glorietta 4 and The Podium. It is also available in all SM and Rustan's department stores.

E-mail the author at bbondoc@inquirer.com.ph



AND 1's Elevate Trainer



ROBERT Bachmann, president and general manager of Relzbach Ventures Inc., local distributor of AND 1

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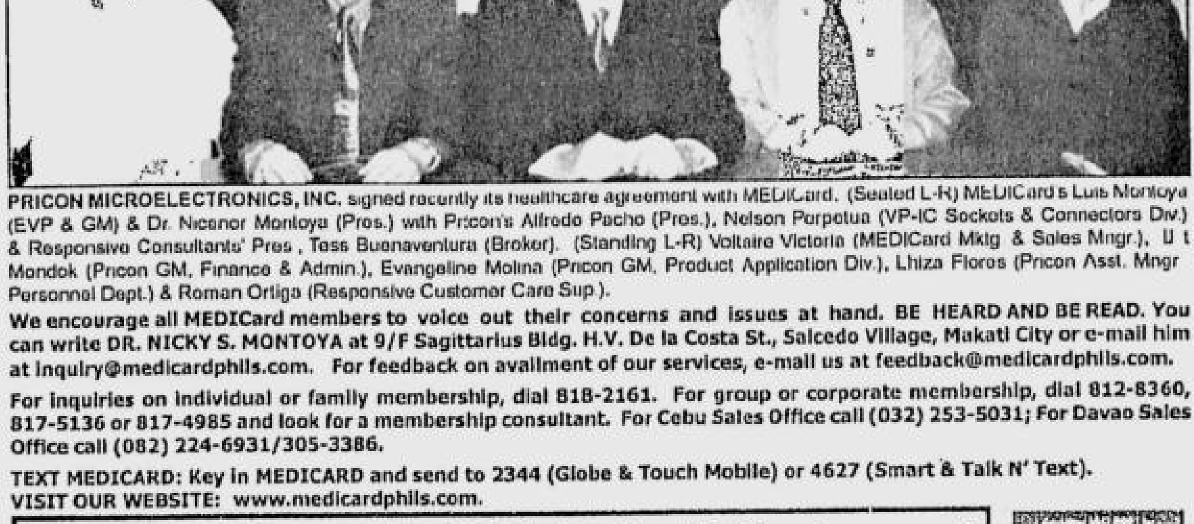
Contract Signing



PRICON MICROELECTRONICS, INC. signed recently its healthcare agreement with MEDICard. (Seated L-R) MEDICard's Luis Montoya (EVP & GM) & Dr. Nicanor Montoya (Pres.) with Pricon's Alfredo Pacho (Pres.), Nelson Perpetua (VP-IC Sockets & Connectors Div.) & Responsive Consultants' Pres , Tess Buenaventura (Broker). (Standing L-R) Voltaire Victoria (MEDICard Mktg & Sales Mngr.), [illegible] Mondok (Pricon GM, Finance & Admin.), Evangeline Molina (Pricon GM, Product Application Div.), Lhiza Flores (Pricon Asst. Mngr. Personnel Dept.) & Roman Ortiga (Responsive Customer Care Sup.).

We encourage all MEDICard members to voice out their concerns and issues at hand. BE HEARD AND BE READ. You can write DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA at 9/F Sagittarius Bldg. H.V. De la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com. For feedback on availment of our services, e-mail us at feedback@medicardphils.com.

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Boiling the Blues Away

Feeding your newborn baby can be an emotional experience. So emotional, in fact, that mothers have been known to break out in song. Mom's repertoire can rival a karaoke bar with her selection of standards like "Loving You," "Didn't Know I Was Looking For Love," "Biggest Part of Me," or even "Endless Love."

Hold that note. Before you bottle-feed, stop...hold that baby bottle up to the light, and think deeply: is this water safe? Otherwise, those sappy love songs playing in your head might just be replaced by the blues -- the howling, moaning gastrointestinal blues.

Let's start with *coliform bacteria*, which is usually detected in surface water (wells, for example) or subsurface sources. *E.coli*, that nasty bug that turned Americans away from hamburgers, is part of this despicable pathogen family.

Yeasts and viruses can also be present in your water, such as this wickedly named trio: *legionella, cryptosporidium* and *giardia*. *Giardia* is a single-cell organism that causes gastrointestinal disorders. *Legionella* is a bacterium that grows rapidly in lukewarm water, and causes Pontiac Fever and legionellosis. *Cryptosporidium* is a parasite that is considered to be one of the most significant causes of diarrheal disease in humans. With symptoms like fever, diarrhea, stomach cramps, and vomiting, *cryptosporidium* can be nasty for people with normal immune systems. But it's worse for individuals with weak immune systems, like your baby. If your baby were to drink water with *cryptosporidium*, he would exhibit symptoms of a far deadlier disease: cholera.

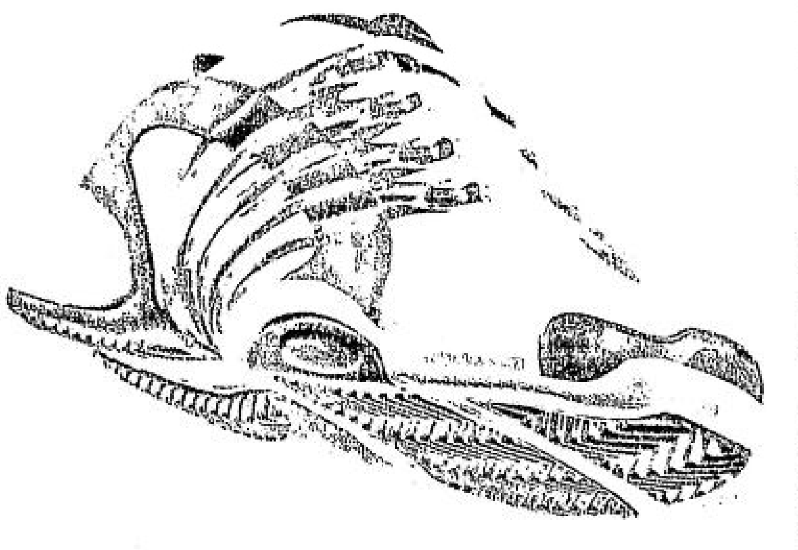
But take heart. Drinking a glass of water need not resemble a tragic ballad. There are things you can do to prevent illness and safeguard baby's health.

Sterilizing water is the best way to remove germs and microorganisms from your water. Water that is brought to a rolling boil alone kills *cryptosporidium* and *giardia*. Therefore, the World Health Organization recommends that babies should intake only sterilized water. It doesn't matter if it's bottled or tap water - the WHO says sterilization is still the best safeguard against disease.

Madeleine Sigman-Grant, Ph.D., R.D., of the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), advise that babies should be given sterilized water only, be it for their formula or for their juice or cereal. Drinking sterilized water also helps prevent your baby from developing thrush, according to child-care guru Dr. Benjamin Spock. Thrush is a fungal infection caused by yeast wherein white patches form on the roof and sides of baby's mouth.

Sterilization can be done at home by bringing water to a rolling boil for 30 minutes. Sterilized bottled water can also be purchased for baby's needs. Bear in mind these necessary safety precautions so that you and your baby can go on singing–and keep those blues from coming to stay.

'Unknown' is basketball players' choice



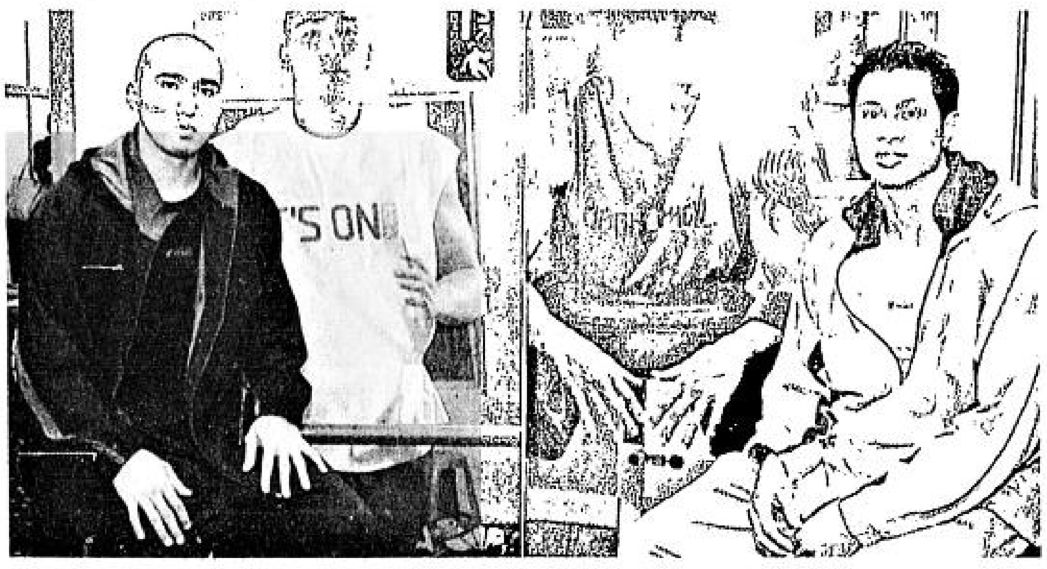
AND 1's Next Level Trainer

By Belle V. Bondoc

WHEN you think of athletic footwear, chances are AND 1 will not be the first name that comes to mind.

But in basketball, where shoes make the player, AND 1 wearers are steadily growing in number. After all, for serious athletes, on-court performance and ankle support—not just looks and brand—are the factors that count when choosing the right shoes.

"The typical basketball shoes may not contain all the necessary features real basketball shoes should have. To play a real game of basketball requires both skill and attitude," says Robert Bachmann, president and general manager of Relzbach Ventures Inc., local distributor of AND 1.



AND 1 endorsers Mike Cortez and Rob Duat of Alaska Aces

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

The basketball brand known for its "faceless, race-less player" logo is for ballplayers with serious game. Known simply as "the player," the icon represents every kid who believes he is the best on the court.

All AND 1 shoes have an internally molded shank (the narrow part of the sole) for arch support and torsional rigidity. Some styles are also equipped with external shanks "for increased support and lateral stability." All footwear is made of high-abrasion rubber, high-quality full-grain leather and synthetic compounds.

Next big thing

AND 1 launched recently its latest Training Series, a collection of basketball footwear and apparel, supposedly the first product line designed to meet the performance demands of basketball training.

"At last here is a basketball training series made for ball players by ball players," says Bachmann.

The Training Series was developed with the speed, strength, quickness and endurance of players during training—whether professional, amateur or weekend athlete—in mind.

It is engineered with three major features: lightweight, breathable and stable.

For the Next Level Trainer, the key inspiration for the design was the Campo Volantin Bridge in Bilbao, Spain, a modern arched bridge. It appears lightweight and airy yet the combined arched shapes and tendon-like cables are aesthetically pleasing while providing stability.

It delivers, among others, a customized, cool and comfortable fit; and a well-cushioned and stable feel.

The Elevate Trainer was inspired by a concept car sketch, very low to the ground and aggressive, with a simple, structural flow from front to back. The shoe provides a functional support structure that maintains a lightweight look.

Performance brand

Despite competition from long-established athletic brands, AND 1 has performed strongly since it was introduced in the local market in 1996, according to Bachmann.

AND 1 has relied mainly on the quality of

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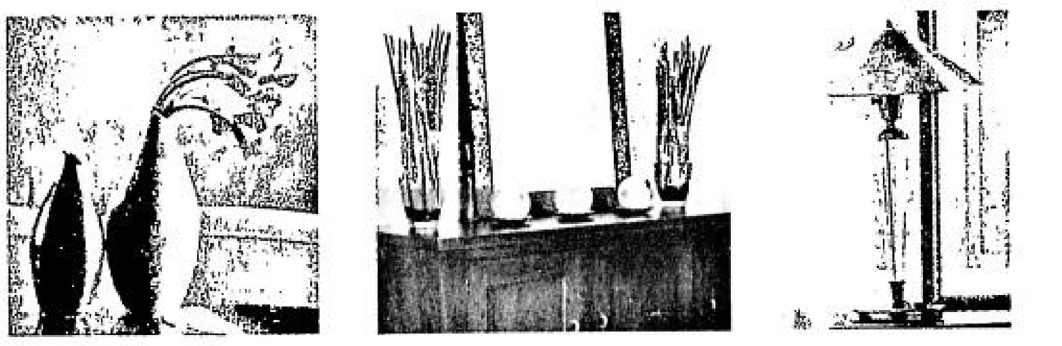

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[illegible]

ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY MISTADES

Wellness is part of women empowerment

By Elizabeth Lolarga
Contributor

IF women hold up half the sky, it follows that their "wellness has great consequence to the world." So said Dr. Benilda S. Santos, dean of the Ateneo de Manila University School of Humanities, in her welcome prayer at a recent Ateneo Library of Women's Writings forum on Women's Ways to Wellness.

Mariel Francisco, director for program development of the Center for Health and Creative Arts, pointed out that wellness encompassed not just physical health and beauty but emotional and spiritual wholeness, too. The former English teacher said the words "hale," "health" and "whole" shared the same roots, and followed the path of holiness. "We are all aspiring saints," she said.

Francisco noted that a woman was often the one caring for

WELLNESS/ D4

onstage 2nyt

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MARCH 16 TUESDAY 38-3942

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Announces the Schedule of the ff. 4 meetings lessons classes:

1. FAMILY & SHORT ORDER DISHES, 16 RECIPES - MARCH 22,23,24,25 (1:30-3:30PM)
2. BASIC CANTONESE DISHES, 16 RECIPES - MARCH 30,31; April 1,2 (9:30-11:30AM)
3. DIMSUM # 6-12 RECIPES SUCH AS SIOPAO, SIOMAI, ETC. MARCH 30,31; April 2 (PM)
4. POPULAR CANTONESE DISHES, 16 RECIPES - APRIL 13,14, 15, 16 (AM)
5. DIMSUM # 8-12 RECIPES SUCH AS KUCHAY BOX, CHICKEN PIE, ETC. - APRIL 13,14,15,16 (PM)

SPECIAL 1 MEETING LESSONS

MARCH 23 (AM) Beef Noodles, Cantonese Congee, Crispies for Topping
25 (AM) Chiew Chou Chili Sauce Beef Belly clear soup, Fried Fish w/cream
26 (PM) Cantonese Style "Ma-Chang" Pig's Blood w/ Kuchay, Steamed bean curd w/Szechuan Vegetable
27 (AM) Kua Pao, Technicolor Shrimp Dumpling , Minced Pork w/ salted cucumber
29 (PM) Misua Guisado, Lomi,Oyster Omelet
APRIL 03 (AM) Cantonese Style Hopia, Lotus cream Hopia, Lotus seeds in milk
17 (AM) Wanton, Suey Kao, Taro Rainbow cake

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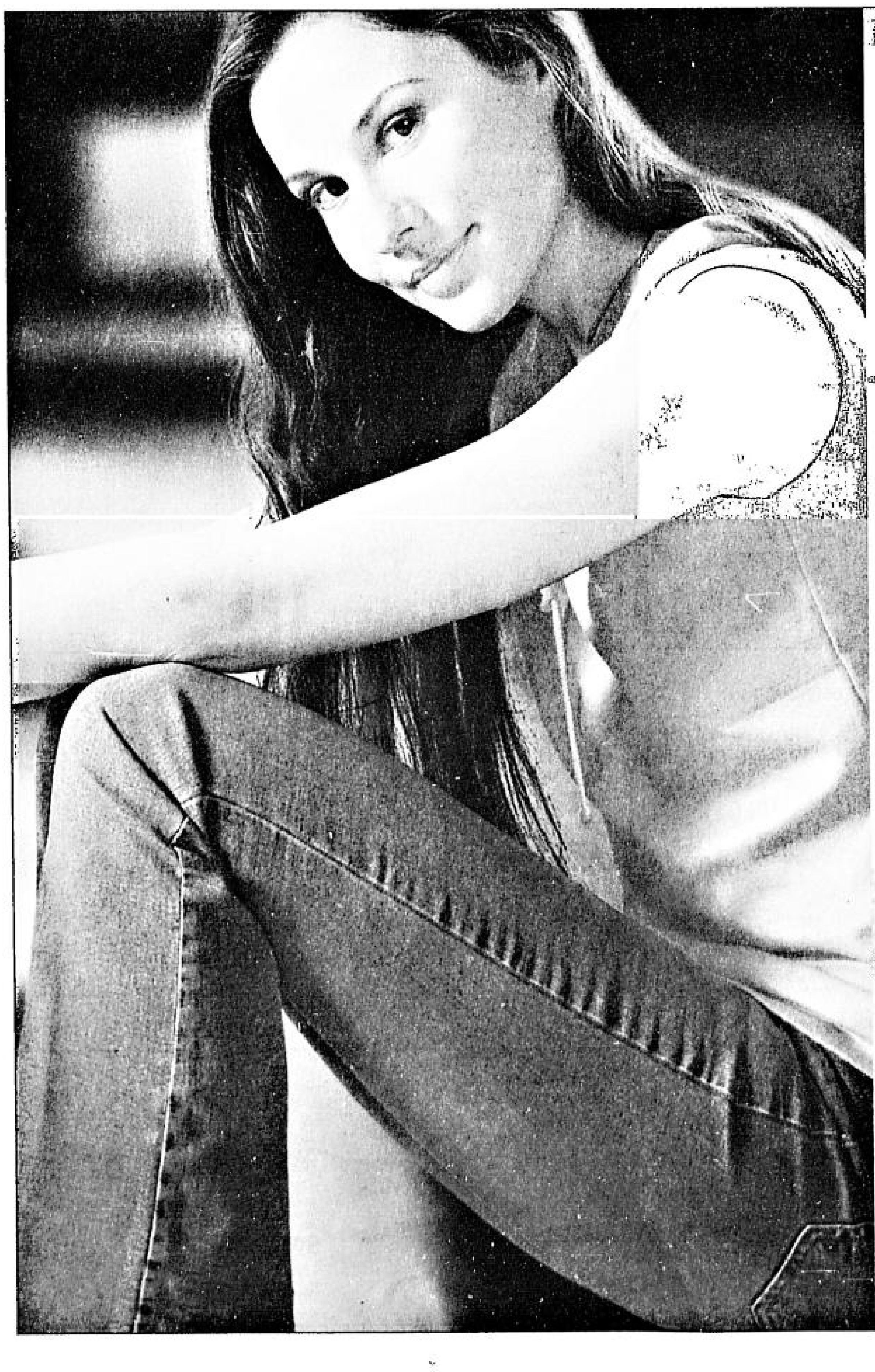

LADIES'wear

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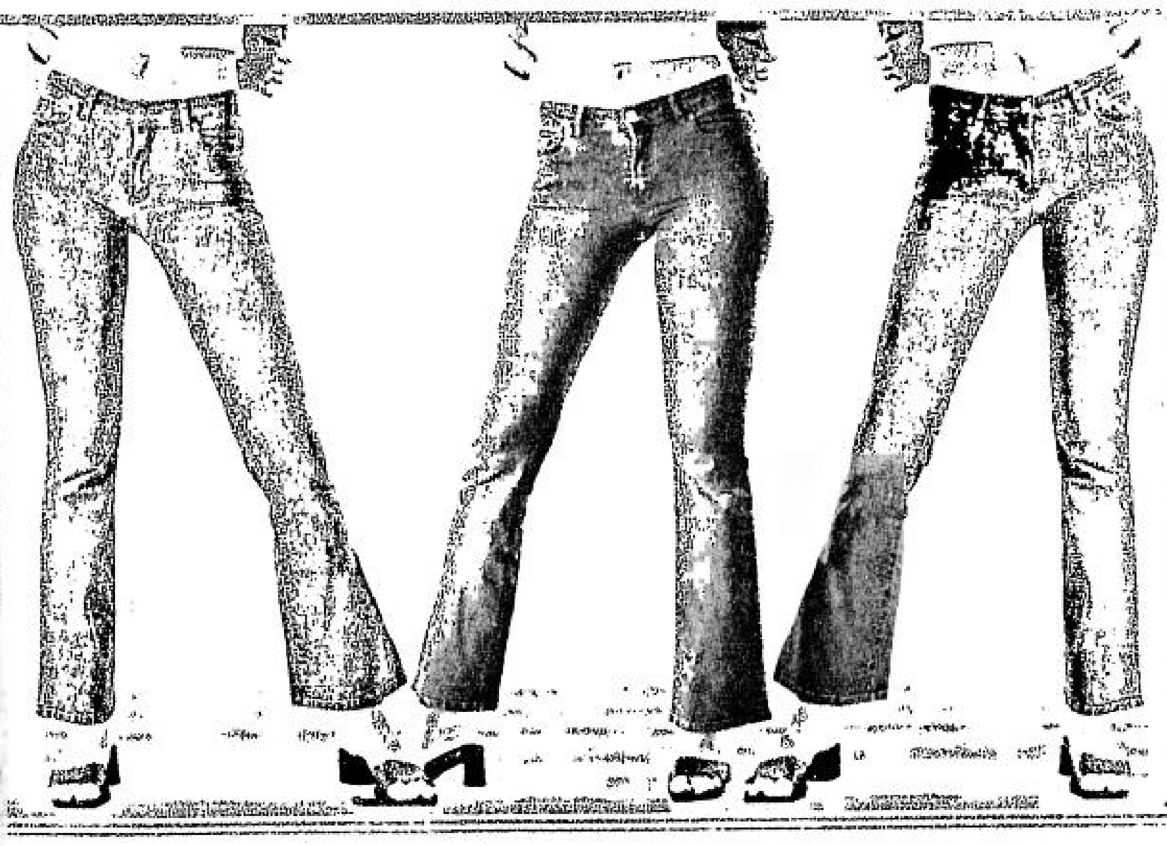
Life is what you make it.



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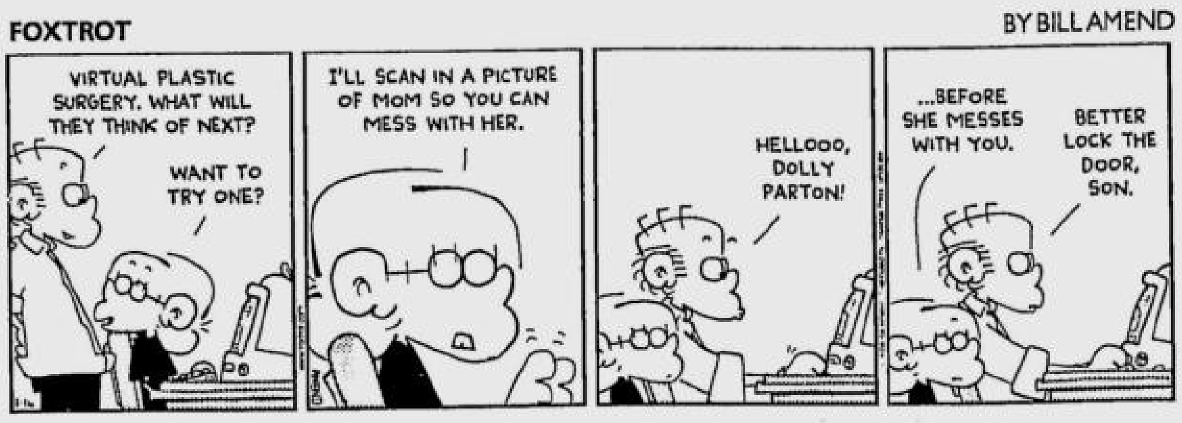
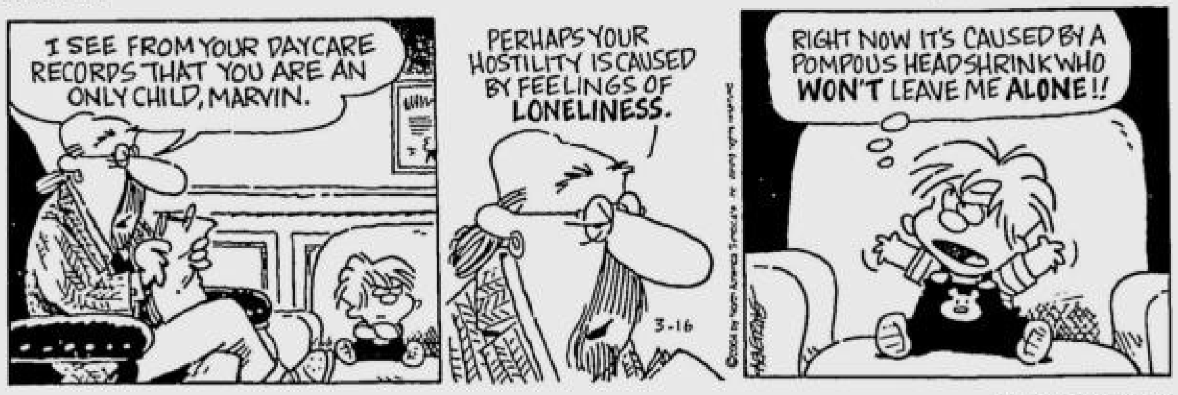
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


VIRTUAL PLASTIC SURGERY. WHAT WILL THEY THINK OF NEXT?
WANT TO TRY ONE?
I'LL SCAN IN A PICTURE OF MOM SO YOU CAN MESS WITH HER.
HELLOOO, DOLLY PARTON!
...BEFORE SHE MESSES WITH YOU.
BETTER LOCK THE DOOR, SON.

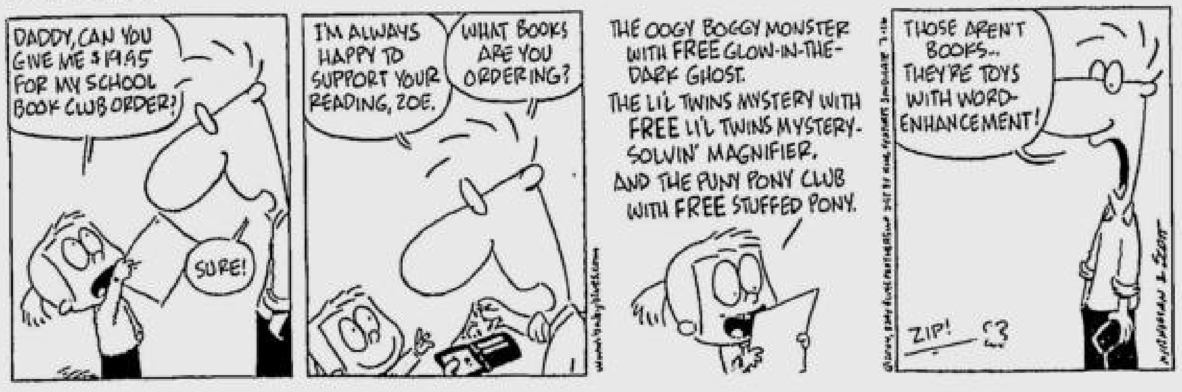
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I SEE FROM YOUR DAYCARE RECORDS THAT YOU ARE AN ONLY CHILD, MARVIN.
PERHAPS YOUR HOSTILITY IS CAUSED BY FEELINGS OF LONELINESS.
RIGHT NOW IT'S CAUSED BY A POMPOUS HEADSHRINK WHO WON'T LEAVE ME ALONE!!
3-16

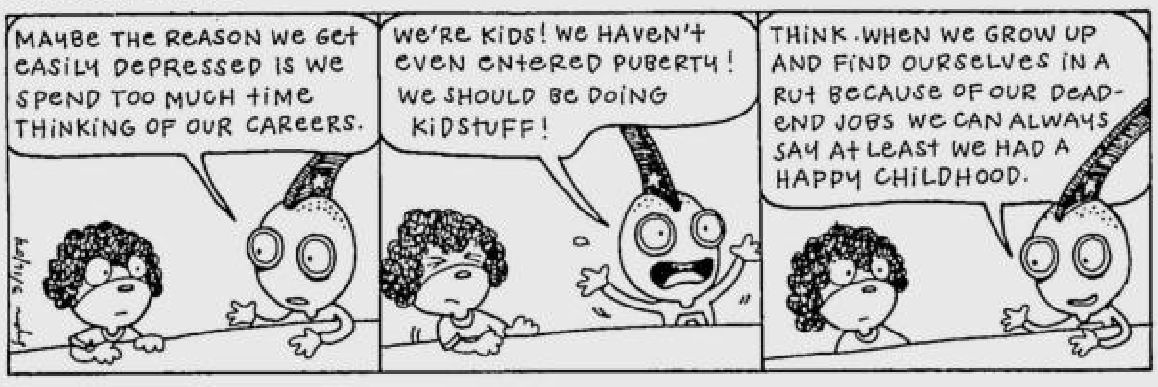
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


DADDY, CAN YOU GIVE ME $19.95 FOR MY SCHOOL BOOK CLUB ORDER?
SURE!
I'M ALWAYS HAPPY TO SUPPORT YOUR READING, ZOE.
WHAT BOOKS ARE YOU ORDERING?
THE OOGY BOGGY MONSTER WITH FREE GLOW-IN-THE-DARK GHOST.
THE LI'L TWINS MYSTERY WITH FREE LI'L TWINS MYSTERY-SOLVIN' MAGNIFIER.
AND THE PUNY PONY CLUB WITH FREE STUFFED PONY.
THOSE AREN'T BOOKS.. THEY'RE TOYS WITH WORD-ENHANCEMENT!
ZIP!

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


MAYBE THE REASON WE GET EASILY DEPRESSED IS WE SPEND TOO MUCH TIME THINKING OF OUR CAREERS.
WE'RE KIDS! WE HAVEN'T EVEN ENTERED PUBERTY! WE SHOULD BE DOING KIDSTUFF!
THINK. WHEN WE GROW UP AND FIND OURSELVES IN A RUT BECAUSE OF OUR DEAD-END JOBS WE CAN ALWAYS SAY AT LEAST WE HAD A HAPPY CHILDHOOD.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have the unusual combination of being highly imaginative and, at the same time, very practical. This means you can appeal to others in a very down-to-earth way. You appear self-assured and confident. You know how to make the best of any situation. You need more solitude to learn something important this year.

Birthdate of: Bernardo Bertolucci, director; Jerry Lewis, comedian/actor; Erik Estrada, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): There's good and there's great, and today is great. This is a wonderful day to earn money and spend it. Whatever you do will beautifully increase your assets.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You feel content, happy and fortunate. All social occasions are easy, pleasant and upbeat. There's more: Romantic overtones can make this day even better!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): It's easy to get in touch with an inner part of yourself that appreciates who you are When you think of things in global terms you're very fortunate.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is a wonderful, amusing, social day. Enjoy all interactions with clubs, organizations and friends. Call somebody up so that you can share a good laugh together.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Don't hold back today. Whatever you do will promote your good name and probably boost your earnings. Your career is wonderfully favored today!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Despite previous delays and setbacks, travel plans, ideas for publishing and hopes to return to school now look marvelous! The only things holding you back are your own self-imposed limitations.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): People are giving you things. Expect gifts, money, favors, advantages, perks, inheritances—whatever. Good fortune smiles on you now.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Today is a lovely, pleasant contrast to your daily grind. Things go smoothly. Partners are cooperative. People are charming and helpful. You're feeling in the pink!

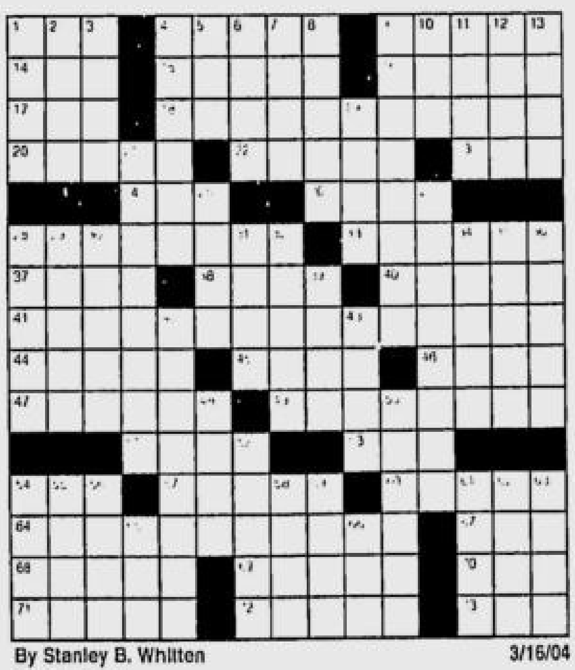
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a lovely day at work. You feel helpful and sympathetic to co-workers; in turn, they're helpful to you. Not only that—great jokes are flying because everyone seems to be happy.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is a wonderful day for financial speculation. Romance, love affairs and vacations are also favored. Business related to foreign countries, publishing, the media and education is particularly strong.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): For some time now, you've been on the receiving end of the generosity of others. Today especially, something helps you to improve your home and its appearance. (Ditto for family members.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You don't feel too much like working today. You just want to have fun! It feels like a perfect day to take a long lunch and to relax with friends.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Stanley B. Whitten
Highwood, IL

3/16/04

ACROSS

1 Unit of electrical resistance
4 Farm yield
9 Bill Evans' instrument
14 Payable on demand
15 Like the old bucket of song
16 Lowest deck
17 Hen product
18 Bard of Avon
20 Oboe's ancestor
22 Shouts
23 Competed
24 Stashed away
26 Director Bunuel
28 Tape editing
33 Christie movie, "__ and Mrs. Miller"
37 Word of resignation
38 Unflappable
40 Droops laxly
41 Bitter-tasting perennial
44 Old-womanish
45 Leander's lover
46 Former fraction of a rupee
47 Apart from self
49 Stoolies
51 Casa room
53 Tic-tac-toe win
54 Lamb's mom
57 Ankle bones
60 Join together
64 Dean's list, e.g.
67 Put on
68 Latticework for vines
69 Up in the rigging
70 Young man
71 Glitches
72 Tithe amount
73 Ames and Asner

DOWN

1 Lofty poems
2 Helmer or Grant
3 Bucks' leader?
4 Vast
5 Stadium cheer
6 Approve
7 Lapdog, briefly
8 1980 Nobel Prize winner
9 Frozen treat
10 Anger
11 Winglike
12 Author Ephron
13 Frank and honest
19 Urban renewal target
21 Teakettle signals
25 Vegas cubes
27 Arachnid with a stinger
28 Plastic wrap brand
29 Dallas suburb
30 Nero's tongue
31 Snack
32 Doomed one
34 Laxative from aloe
35 Get in the way of
36 Sen. Kefauver
39 Actress Flynn Boyle
42 Will makers
43 Japanese zither
48 Norwegian king
50 Big day in July
52 Enlightened Buddhist
54 Periods of note
55 Frayed
56 Exile isle
58 Shoe part
59 Privy to
61 At rest
62 Warty amphibian
63 Ceases
65 Ship's record
66 Frequently, in verse

Monday's Puzzle Solved

H	A	B	I	T	■	F	L	A	G	■	K	E	E	P
A	L	O	N	E	■	R	I	L	E	■	I	S	E	E
F	A	N	T	A	S	Y	F	O	O	T	B	A	L	L
T	I	D	E	■	E	P	E	E	■	R	O	U	S	T
■	■	■	R	A	M	A	■	■	B	U	S	■	■	■
F	O	U	N	D	I	N	G	F	A	T	H	E	R	S
L	U	T	E	S	■	■	R	I	C	H	■	V	O	W
U	N	I	T	■	T	H	I	N	K	■	T	O	D	O
F	C	C	■	L	O	U	P	■	■	F	A	K	I	R
F	E	A	T	H	E	R	E	D	F	R	I	E	N	D
■	■	■	H	I	S	■	■	R	E	A	L	■	■	■
A	W	A	R	E	■	G	O	Y	A	■	G	A	P	E
F	A	K	E	F	I	N	G	E	R	N	A	I	L	S
A	R	I	A	■	C	A	R	R	■	A	T	L	A	S
R	E	N	T	■	E	W	E	S	■	P	E	S	T	O

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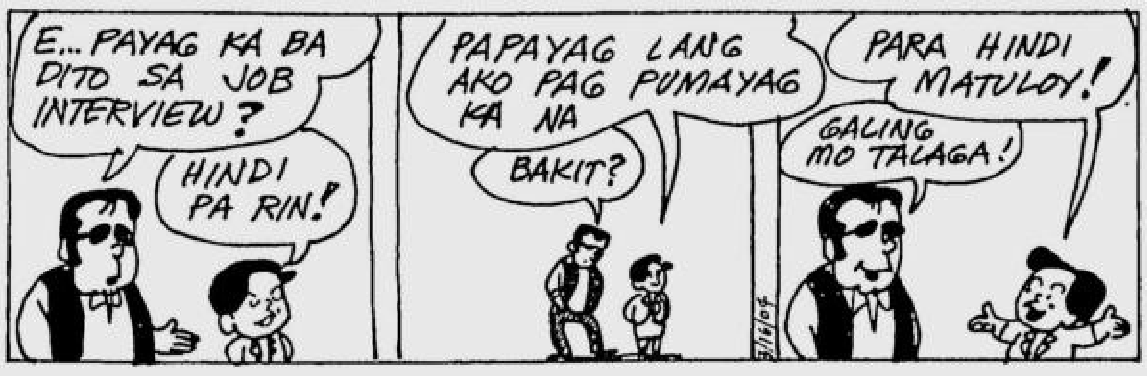
3/16/04

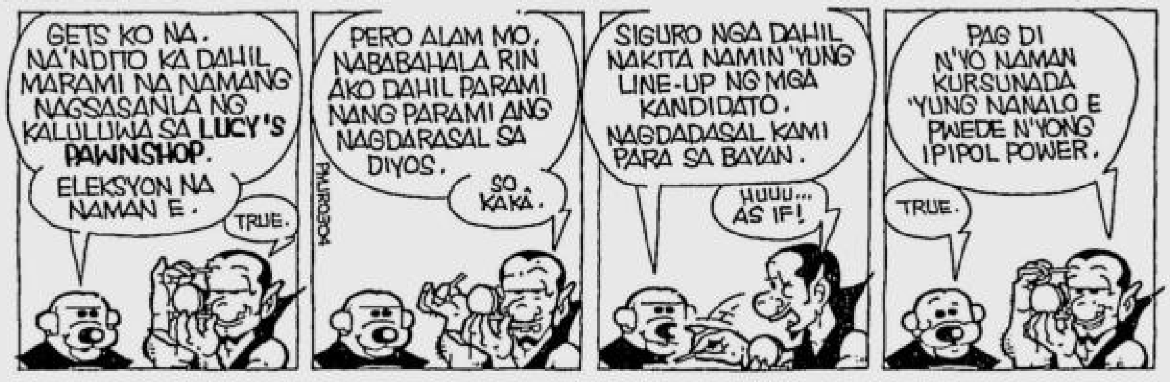
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


E... PAYAG KA BA DITO SA JOB INTERVIEW?
HINDI PA RIN!
PAPAYAG LANG AKO PAG PUMAYAG KA NA
BAKIT?
PARA HINDI MATULOY!
GALING MO TALAGA!

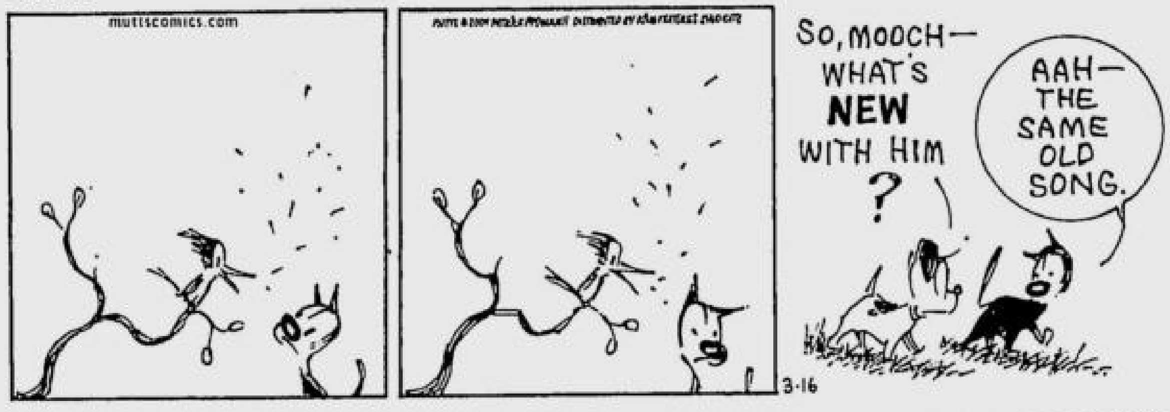
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


GETS KO NA. NA'NDITO KA DAHIL MARAMI NA NAMANG NAGSASANLA NG KALULUWA SA LUCY'S PAWNSHOP.
ELEKSYON NA NAMAN E.
TRUE.
PERO ALAM MO, NABABAHALA RIN AKO DAHIL PARAMI NANG PARAMI ANG NAGDARASAL SA DIYOS.
SO. KAKA.
SIGURO NGA DAHIL NAKITA NAMIN 'YUNG LINE-UP NG MGA KANDIDATO. NAGDADASAL KAMI PARA SA BAYAN.
HUUU... AS IF!
PAG DI N'YO NAMAN KURSUNADA 'YUNG NANALO E PWEDE N'YONG IPIPOL POWER.
TRUE.

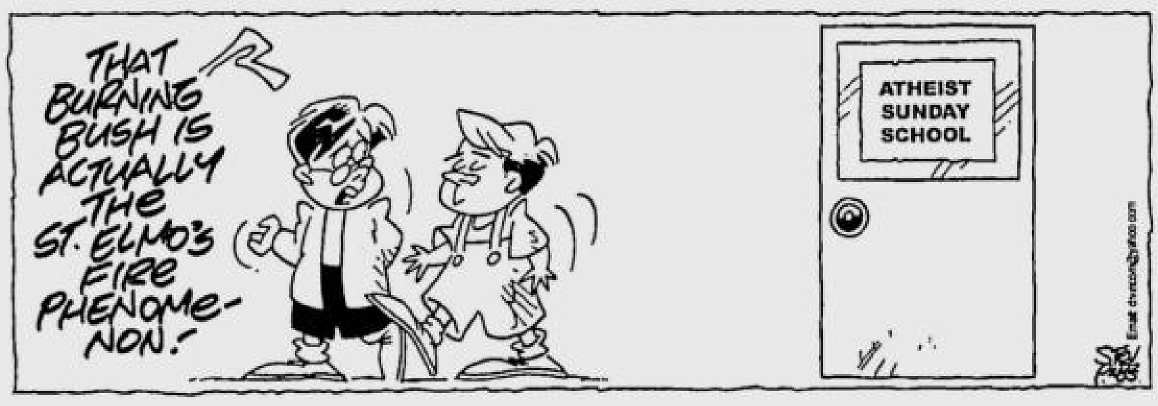
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


muttscomics.com
SO, MOOCH— WHAT'S NEW WITH HIM?
AAH— THE SAME OLD SONG.
3-16

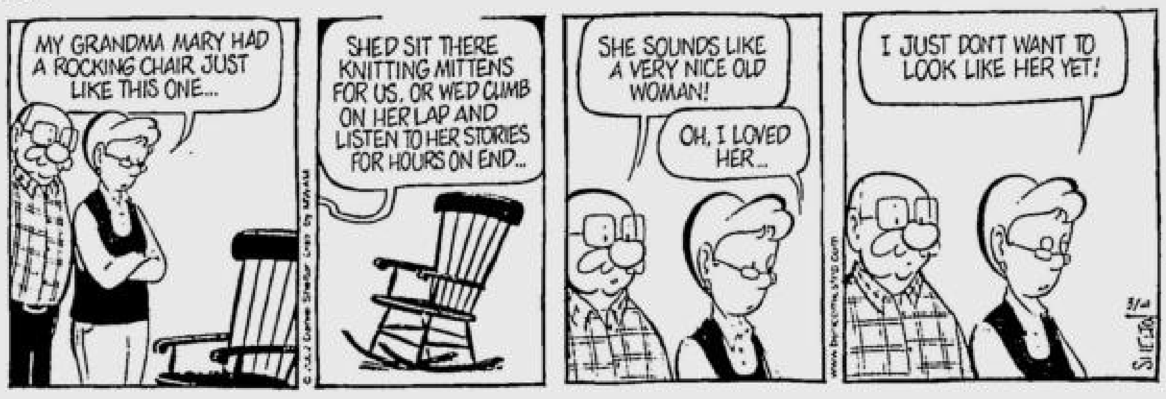
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


THAT BURNING BUSH IS ACTUALLY THE ST. ELMO'S FIRE PHENOMENON!
ATHEIST SUNDAY SCHOOL

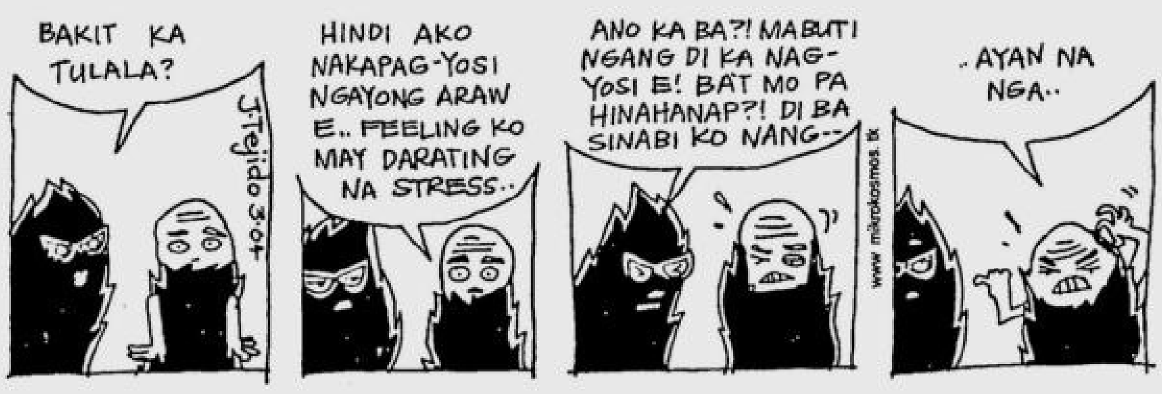
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


MY GRANDMA MARY HAD A ROCKING CHAIR JUST LIKE THIS ONE...
SHE'D SIT THERE KNITTING MITTENS FOR US, OR WE'D CLIMB ON HER LAP AND LISTEN TO HER STORIES FOR HOURS ON END...
SHE SOUNDS LIKE A VERY NICE OLD WOMAN!
OH, I LOVED HER...
I JUST DON'T WANT TO LOOK LIKE HER YET!

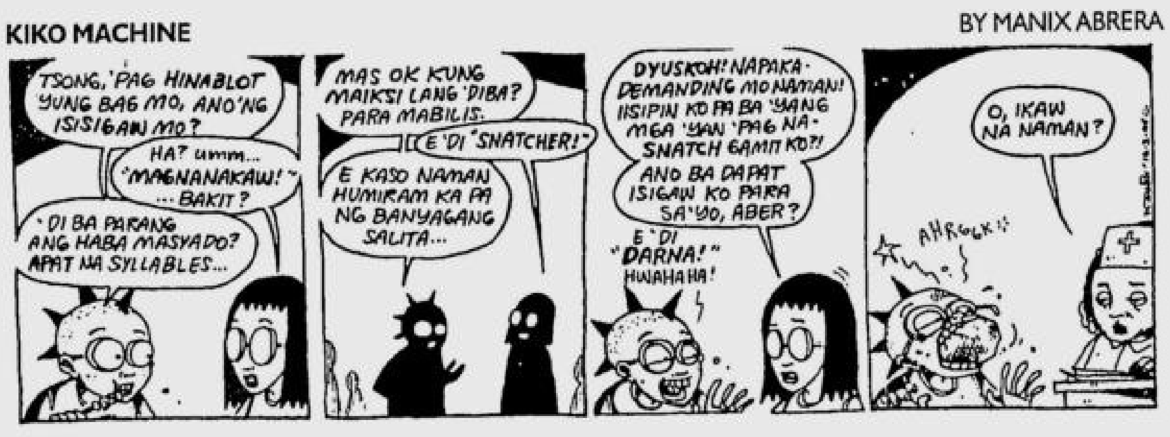
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


BAKIT KA TULALA?
J.Tejido 3.04
HINDI AKO NAKAPAG-YOSI NGAYONG ARAW E.. FEELING KO MAY DARATING NA STRESS..
ANO KA BA?! MABUTI NGANG DI KA NAG-YOSI E! BAT MO PA HINAHANAP?! DI BA SINABI KO NANG--
www.mikrokosmos.tk
..AYAN NA NGA..

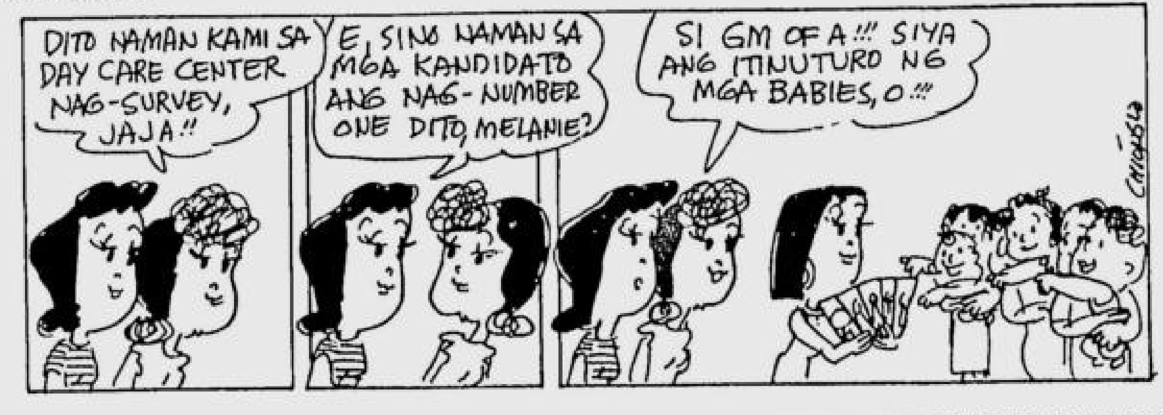
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


TSONG, 'PAG HINABLOT 'YUNG BAG MO, ANO'NG ISISIGAW MO?
HA? umm... "MAGNANAKAW!" ...BAKIT?
'DI BA PARANG ANG HABA MASYADO? APAT NA SYLLABLES...
MAS OK KUNG MAIKSI LANG 'DIBA? PARA MABILIS.
E 'DI "SNATCHER!"
E KASO NAMAN HUMIRAM KA PA NG BANYAGANG SALITA...
DYUSKOH! NAPAKA-DEMANDING MO NAMAN! IISIPIN KO PA BA 'YANG MGA 'YAN 'PAG NA-SNATCH GAMIT KO?!
ANO BA DAPAT ISIGAW KO PARA SA'YO, ABER?
E 'DI "DARNA!" HWAHAHA!
AHRGGK!!
O, IKAW NA NAMAN?

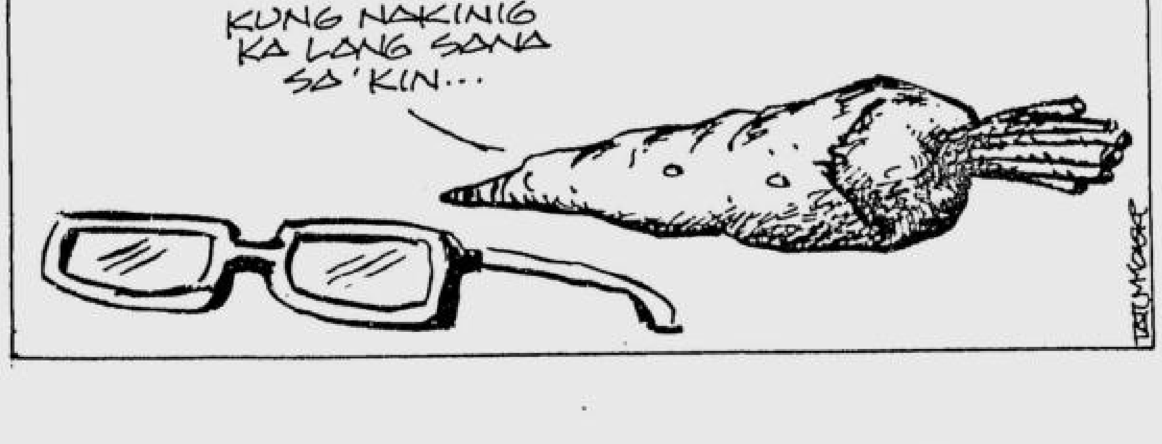
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


DITO NAMAN KAMI SA DAY CARE CENTER NAG-SURVEY, JAJA!!
E, SINO NAMAN SA MGA KANDIDATO ANG NAG-NUMBER ONE DITO, MELANIE?
SI GM OF A!!! SIYA ANG ITINUTURO NG MGA BABIES, O!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


KUNG NAKINIG KA LANG SANA SA'KIN...

SINGING a Filipino Medley for the grand finale of POGS convention's opening night program: Dr. Cresli Fuentes, Christine Ybañez of Mead Johnson Phils. Inc., Dr. Rebecca Singson, Mead Johnson's Rodel Olesco, and Dr. Lilian Aspra

MANDY NAVASERO

Singing doctors

THE RECENT three-day convention of the Philippine Obstetrical and Gynecological Society (POGS) opened with an hour-and-a-half program showcasing the dance and musical talents of its members.

Twenty-three ob-gyne doctors (specialists in women's health problems including pregnancy and child birth) participated in the program.

They included Dr. Rainiero Abad, former POGS president and chair of the Dr. Jose Delgado Memorial Hospital; Dr. Roger Mendiola, president of the Philippine Society of Midwifery and consultant at the Capitol Medical Center; Dr. Rebecca Singson of the Makati Medical Center and the Asian Hospital and Medical Center; Dr. Malu Escobar, a consultant at the Far Eastern University Hospital; and Dr. Eileen Manalo, chair of the POGS Fellowship Committee.

DR. Eileen Manalo, chair of POGS Fellowship Committee

About 3,500 ob-gynes from all over the country attended the convention at the Philippine Plaza Hotel. Speakers included Dr. Christopher Haines from Hong Kong, Dr. Louis Gooren from the Netherlands; and Dr. Genara Limson, and Dr. Walfrido Sumpaico from the Philippines. There were also guests from Japan, Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea.

The opening night was sponsored by Mead Johnson Philippines Inc.

The 2004 POGS officers are Dr. Rosendo Roque, president; Evelyn Palaypayon, vice president; Susan Nagtalon, secretary; and Ditas Decena, treasurer. Members of the board of trustees are Mayumi Bismark, Gil Gonzales, Mario Festin, Lourdes Capito, Regta Pichay and Rogelio Mendoza.

OPENING night emcees: Dr. Ditas Decena, POGS PRO; Dr. Martin Manahan, POGS Fellowship Committee vice chair; and Elmer Manus, clinical meeting associate, Mead Johnson Phils. Inc.

Instinct may be more reliable than logic

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

"I TRY to use my guts. As I get older, I learn to trust my guts even more, even if it doesn't make sense. I try to listen to that little voice in my head that tells me what to do. We all know what the right thing is, but somehow we don't follow our instinct, and that's when things mess up."

That piece of insight on how the human mind works did not come from a neuroscientist or psychologist but from Academy Award-winning Hollywood actress Halle Berry ("Die Another Day," "X-Men 2," "Monster's Ball" and "Gothika"), during a recent interview with INQUIRER's Los Angeles correspondent Janet Susan Napales (PDI, 03/01/04).

I was struck by Ms Berry's remark because, as a long time teacher of Inner Mind Development and Intuition, I had been teaching people precisely how to trust the right side of their brains, the seat of instinct, intuition and gut feel, "even if it doesn't make sense."

Dr. Roger Sperry, a biologist, discovered that the two hemispheres of the human brain did not perform the same function. The left half of the brain was primarily concerned with logic, with verbal and analytical thinking; whereas the right half was concerned with nonverbal thinking, such as gut feel, intuition or instinct. It was also concerned with synthesis, depth and perspective.

Different functions

When we are analyzing something or making mental calculation, we are using primarily our left brain. When we are drawing or having mental visions or images, we are engaging primarily our right brain. Of course, both sides are always at work and there's no such thing as purely left- or purely right-brain person.

The left brain thinks in terms of logic and verbal reasoning. It proceeds from major premise, minor premise and conclusion in a systematic, orderly manner. Not so the right brain. It thinks in terms of images and pictures and not in abstract generalities. It grasps the truth of a statement or an event at once, spontaneously and without ratiocination or logical analysis.

And one thing more, whereas the left, analytical brain can make mistakes in its conclusion, the right brain is seldom, if ever, wrong. It knows or grasps things at once, intuitively, spontaneously, often to the consternation of the left, analytical brain.

Unlike the left brain, the right intuitive brain can arrive at correct conclusions, even without inputs from our sensory faculties. It does so spontaneously, instinctively. When we learn to develop and trust our right brain, our gut feel and instincts, we can make better decisions.

Too late

Since the conclusions made by the right brain are often nonlogical and don't make sense, the more dominant left analytical brain tends to ignore them. Many times it's already too late when we realize we should have followed our gut feel or instinct.

For his pioneering discovery of the different functions of the left and right hemispheres of the human brain, Dr. Roger Sperry won the Nobel Prize for Medicine, although he was not a doctor.

More and more people in business organizations and educational institutions are beginning to realize the value of training our right brain faculties. There are now courses in business schools on intuitive management and creativity. Thinking out-of-the-box has become respectable, instead of condemnable.

Now business educators and management consultants talk in terms of whole brain thinking rather than purely rational thinking. Training in intuition has become as critical as other management skills. This is as it should be.

Listen to my dzMM radio program every Sunday, 7-8:30 p.m.

HAL goes to Cebu

COCA-COLA brought recently its popular Champions Basketball Clinic to Cebu.

Conducted for free by the Coca-Cola Tigers with the Department of Health, the clinic was part of the beverage company's Healthy and Active Lifestyle (HAL) program.

The program promotes a positive change in young people through balanced diet, proper hydration and adequate physical activity.

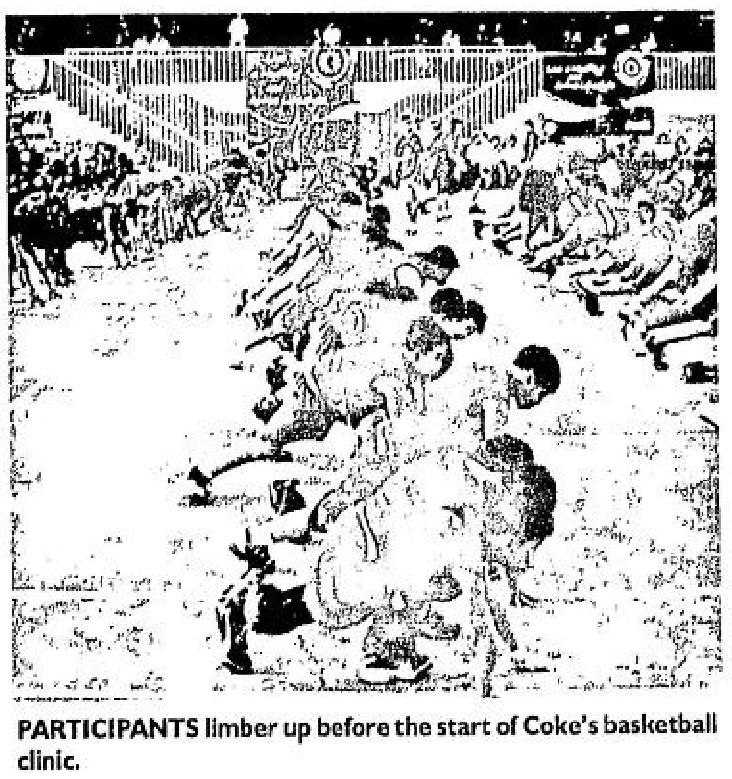
Some 300 kids, aged 8-15, participated in the clinic, the fifth clinic to be held, at the Sacred Heart-Jesuit gym.

Participants got an exclusive Champions Basketball Clinic shirt and a certificate of completion signed by Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit.

Coca-Cola Tigers head coach Chot Reyes handled the clinic, assisted by his United States Basketball Academy-certified coaching staff and some playing members of the team like Johnny Abarrientos, Reynel Hugnatan and Rob Wainright.

Members of the Coca-Cola Tigers gave personalized on-court mentoring on ball-handling, individual moves, rebounding, post defense and mechanics, shooting and perimeter defense.

The Coca-Cola Tigers, the newest franchise in the Philippine Basketball Association, is the only team in the pro league's history to win a championship on its first year. It won its second title in the Reinforced Conference in December.



PARTICIPANTS limber up before the start of Coke's basketball clinic.

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Black Coffee
Athens
Frappé
Istanbul
Orta Şekerli Kahve
Dusseldorf
Kaffe mit Milch
Malta
Kafe Espresso
Rome
Cappuccino
Munich
Einspänner
Paris
Café au Lait
Larnaca
Eleniko Café
London
Frappe Latte
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Go jump on a trampoline and wake up your system

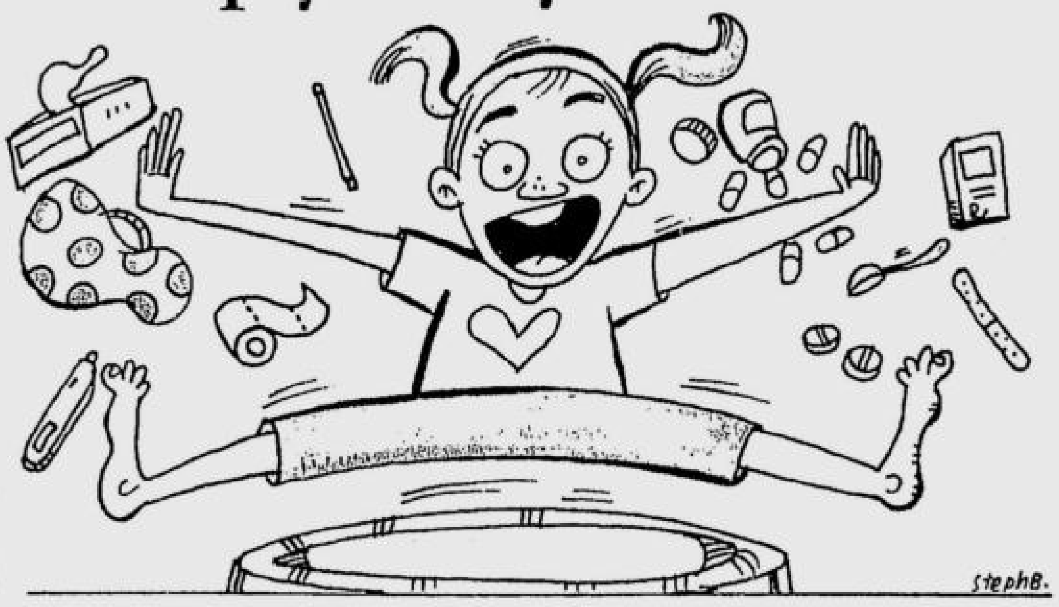
ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

MODERN men/women have to cope with lifestyle diseases like cancer, hypertension, diabetes, heart conditions. These illnesses are caused by a way of life that has a low regard for health due to ignorance, lack of information/education, apathy and negligence.

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

Research has proven that the human body's cells have intelligence and are constantly linked to thoughts. Dr. Deepak Chopra describes it as "eavesdropping on thoughts and being changed by them."

It is common knowledge that depression can compromise the immune system while being in a state of love can restore it. Despair and sadness can cause heart attacks, even cancer, thus shortening one's life, but joy and a sense of fulfillment can add years.

Stress as destroyer

A single remembered thought about a stressful situation in our life can trigger a flood of stress hormones in the body. It causes as much damage as the original situation.

So does it make any sense to resurrect painful episodes from the past, knowing you are causing more damage to yourself? Geneticists believe that a person's life span is determined by his/her genes or DNA. Not much importance is given to a person's strong will to live or a lifestyle that is simple and healthy.

Outside the laboratory, it is widely believed that DNA is definitely influenced by all your thoughts, feelings and actions. Is DNA then your destiny, your death sentence?

In his book "Ageless Body, Timeless Mind," Chopra says "the stress hormones that play such a critical part in aging are regulated by RNA, which is a copy of DNA. When you make a lifestyle change that reduces stress, the RNA in your cells responds by churning out fewer stress hormones."

Health tips from a friend

Over a vegetarian lunch at Satya's (tel. 9203487 in Loyola Heights), Omar Arabia, holistic healer, explains the importance of the following:

Balance. Life and work should be balanced. More work and no play can cause an overload on one's stress endurance. Pay attention to "not only what's eating you, but also to what you are eating."

Diet. In the end, nothing replaces a good eating habit, one filled with as many greens, fruits and clean water. Excesses in sugar, alcohol, salt and fat should be a thing of the past.

Detoxification. The elimination system should be a major health concern. Any sluggishness in bowel movements should act like an early warning. The elimination system includes the liver, colon, lymphatics, kidneys, lungs and arteries. Depending on the health problem, treatments given to patients include organic coffee enemas, kidney cleanings (using local herbal teas, *cogon* roots, lemon grass, cornsilk, etc.), skin brushing to stimulate the lymph. (Consider having C-lium Fiber in your juice daily, available at Mercury Drugstore.)

Great juices that nourish and detoxify the body are fresh *buko* (without meat), carrot, apple, leaf lettuce and red apple, *singkamas*.

Exercise. Movement is good for the body, it can never be bad. Brisk walking daily is good enough. The best way though to wake up your entire system is to, believe it or not, use the trampoline. Jumping on a trampoline for just 10 minutes is enough to perk up your lymph. (Consider Play Underground, Power Plant Mall Rockwell Center.)

Prayer and meditation. Inner peace is conducive to healing. Being in the right frame of mind and in a loving, calm state contributes to the prevention of illness. Practice regular meditation and have an active, prayerful life.

Support group. Whatever support you might get—emotional, artistic, spiritual, intellectual—it is vital that you belong to a group of like-minded people dedicated to helping one another achieve greater fulfillment in life.

Preventive medicine. To prolong the life and quality of life of a patient, the best wellness medicine is preventive intervention through a comprehensive approach that includes nutritional modification, systemic detoxification and the right perspective and frame of mind.

Beauty—Tips to maintain one's youthful looks: adopt the right attitude in life, one that is loving and positive; try to have a nonviolent attitude toward yourself and others, be at peace, have a healthy diet, detoxify, exercise.

From cocoon to butterfly

Lifestyle change is impossible without a transformation in your deepest levels of consciousness. If you intend to make that giant leap, step into your cocoon. Imagine yourself enveloped in darkness. Embraced by your frustrations and weaknesses, invoke your inner strength and courage—affirm: "I will emerge a butterfly, transformed and complete."

Love and light!

Special thanks to Proactive Medical Clinic-Center for Integrative and Preventive Medicine at 20 F. Collantes St., Xavierville Subdivision, Loyola Heights, QC. Call 4266363.

E-mail the author at coryquirino_fy@yahoo.com

A woman should not take her own health for granted and should be responsible for her well-being

MARIEL Francisco

Wellness is part of women empowerment

From page D1

sick members of the family but often had no one to attend to her when she was ill. She stressed that a woman should not take her own health for granted and should take responsibility for her own wellness.

Daily renewal

Francisco said a woman must renew herself daily, with every moment being a constant and consistent striving for wellness until "it becomes a lifestyle itself."

Dr. Jenny Madamba, physician-acupuncturist-development worker, reviewed concepts of wellness in different civilizations.

What they had in common ground was wellness was not just the absence of disease but was also a state of mental, social and physical fitness.

She drew the link between poverty and ill health and warned that the degradation of the environment was giving rise to deadly diseases.

Madamba cited the dengue-carrying mosquito. With the forests gone, the insect's natural predator has also vanished.

"Debt, exploitation, economic stagnation contribute to disease," she continued. She said public health was about getting "the balance right between humans and nature. You can't be totally healthy if you live in an unhealthy environment."

Whole-life wellness

Medicine alone is not enough. Madamba said women should adopt a whole-life wellness program. This means eating the right food, getting and staying fit, feeling good and staying young, caring for and planning one's family.

People should follow the dictum: "Live simply so that others may simply live."

Dr. Christine Gonzalez, wholistic nutritionist-microbiologist-aromatherapist, said wrong nutrition was responsible for half of the leading causes of illness among women. She gave as an example breast cancer. The Philippines has the highest breast cancer rate in Asia.

Gonzalez showed the relationship between breast cancer and diet. She said a high-fat diet increased the risk of breast cancer. Other contributing factors were trans-fatty acid (found in margarine and some baked food), excess alcohol and environmental pollutants.

Sound nutrition that improved a woman's health should mean eating whatever was in season since this would be cheaper, fresher and easily accessible; choosing a diet that contained protein, calcium, essential oils, carbohydrates and starches; consuming whole grains, fruits and vegetables. By doing this, "the body's detoxification becomes efficient," she said.

Personal decision

Echoing Francisco, she said, "Health is an individual responsibility. To be healthy is our personal decision."

Equally important is nurturing the self and the spirit. Dr. Lourdes Arellano Carandang, a clinical psychologist, said the key to emotional and spiritual wellness was balance between work and play, between giving and receiving, between being with others and being alone.

DR. Lourdes Carandang

Balance is also an acronym. Carandang said "B" stood for being the beholder of beauty. Psychologically, humans needed to be surrounded by beauty and people. This also meant getting rid of clutter, including negative people.

"A" means acceptance. "Anything that you accept fully will get you there, will take you into peace. There is peace in sadness, there is peace in loneliness. The paradox of pain is if you accept it and recognize it, it will move. If you deny it, it will stay and fester," the psychologist said.

"L" means letting go—of a toxic relationship or an adolescent wanting to "fly" away. Carandang observed that those who needed to be in control had a hard time trusting and letting go.

Reality and integrity

The next "A" is for authenticity or being true to oneself. It is all about being real and having integrity. Carandang said it was energy-draining to pretend and to deny one's feelings. Midlife means being authentic.

She said people became mentally or spiritually ill because they were not given a chance to be authentic. Carandang said, "One of the best things you can do is to validate a feeling."

"N" is for a "high-quality" no. This type of no, according to Carandang, was "not reactive but based on an assessment and insight that what you're doing is right." She added that "no" must be said graciously, firmly and respectfully.

"C" is for both care and compassion that Carandang defined as "the awareness of a deep bond between yourself and all creatures." This trait can be shown in helping someone realize his/her potential or developing interest in something outside of oneself.

"Not to care makes us stagnate," Carandang said, adding that the narcissistic person was one who couldn't see the viewpoint of the other person.

Lastly, "E" is for enjoying life. She advised both women and men to "live joyfully in gratitude as a way of life. A woman's essence is embracing and encompassing. We give life."

Conference on natural health

HEALING the mind, body and spirit is the theme of the 3rd Philippines Congress and Exhibition on Natural Health to be held March 20-21 at Holiday Inn, Galleria Manila (formerly Galleria Suites).

Topics will include healing the fetal child, mind-body healing therapies, homeopathic medicine, Oxygen Therapy, Healing the Mind, Herbal Medicine, Stress Management, Past Life Therapy Quantum Stealing, and the like.

The conference is organized by the International Association of Educators for World Peace-Philippines, in cooperation with the Council for Early Childhood Education in the Phils.

Registration fee is P2,500, including meals, snacks, conference kit and automatic membership to IAEWP-Philippines. Call 3717015/16.

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